ZZAP! 64

COMMODORE

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
A LOOKBACK WITH ZZAP! BACK
LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM
THE LATEST GAMES REVIEWED!

AND ME!!

ZZAP! 64

Jan/Feb 2022

CONTENTS

"IT'S HALF THE BAG IT USED TO BE"

ZZAP! ED

WHSMITH IS GO!

When I was in my teens, WHSmith was the shop I used to go to each Saturday to check out all the new game releases and flick through the many computer-related magazines on the shelves. With the bit of pocket money I had, I could only afford one magazine now and again, so I had to pick carefully. Should I buy more than one magazine, or should I save up for the latest Hewson game? The go-to magazines were those by Newsfield — CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and Amtix. The covers by Oli were incredible — I had not seen anything quite like it before.

Roll on umpteen years, and ZZAP! 64 is to be back in WHSmith. From the 12th of February, ZZAP! 64, CRASH and our FUSION magazine will be on the shelves in your local store in the form of bookazines. They have brand new covers, are each 120 pages, paperback, and bar a few small changes, are the respective Annuals that were released at the end of last year.

To mark the occasion, we have a limited edition presentation box (graced by the bookazine cover artwork) with the three bookazines inside, a pin badge, three postcards and a numbered, signed certificate of ownership. The certificate will also have a "F"usion wax seal of approval. A nice keepsake, I am sure you will agree. We are producing just three hundred of these — if you fancy one, then head over to https://bit.ly/3IT1kOT and put in your order.

In other news, we will be announcing shortly the the joining of the Psytronik label with Fusion Retro Books and the publishing of Commodore 64 games under the ZZAP! 64 label. We are early days in our thinking on how this will work — more news next issue.

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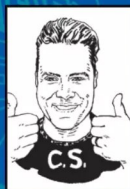OF Ownership

Number 1 of 300   SIGNATURE

Binders

Amazingly we are already at issue #6 of ZZAP! If you are a binder owner, it is now half full! We received a delivery of binders at ZZAP! Towers before XMAS — over 400 have been sent out, with just a few left in stock. You can pre-order a binder on the site here: https://bit.ly/3GhDWce

You really need to know who to blame! Here is our panel of games reviewers – all kids (at heart)

Perifractic aka **CHRISTIAN SIMPSON** is a husband (to Ladyfractic), father of 3 (furbabies), and actor-writer with a problematic love of retrocomputing. So problematic in fact that the only way to quench that thirst was to start a You Tube channel called "Perifractic's Retro Recipes" so he could play with those beautiful vintage machines every day (usually the C64 of course — where his favourite game is *Ghostbusters* mwahahah!). He's been making retro music since before it was retro, and you may even recognise him from small roles in big movie franchises, though he says nothing was as exciting as being part of the ZZAP! 64 team. As a writer and original ZZAP! subscriber we know he'll be right at home here at ZZAP! Towers. http://perifractic.com

"CHEERS BERRYFRACTIC: SAY HI TO LADYFRACTIC FOR ME!"

Still gaming in his (very late) 40s and hubby to equally mad gamer Shelly and their massive consoles collection, former staff writer **ROBIN HOGG** flew the Newsfield nest for rather different climates and is now breaking bits of planes for a living, which is ironic as he did much the same flying his beloved flight simulators at ZZAP! Towers. Halcyon days, he says with no hint of rose tint on his glasses (just don't mention Operation Thunderbolt). Favourite games? *Armalyte* as he is a massive *Gradius* fan, and *Project: Stealth Fighter* which happens to be his all time favourite C64 game. On a final note (guilty conscience?), Robin would like to refer readers to the title of his tips section of old if they found any tips and pokes didn't quite work as planned. Excuses, excuses.

A ZZAP! 64 reader since Issue 4, **PAUL MORRISON** unsuccessfully applied for a reviewer's job at the mag when just 17. Proving that dreams can come true, Paul is finally an official ZZAP! staffer, but can be found writing about 8-bit games in various other places, too. A gamer since the 1970s, and briefly the MAME World Record holder on *Yie Ar Kung-Fu*, when he's not welded to his keyboard for writing purposes, Paul enjoys nothing more than chatting with like-minded folks and assuring them that *Paradroid* is, indeed, the best game ever. Outside gaming, when he isn't dealing with a moody teenager or helping his youngest son with yet another maths problem, he can often be found sobbing into his Newcastle United scarf or insisting that 1980s rock music is still miles better than all that modern rubbish.

It was a warm weekend morning sometime in March 1984 when two parents gave their son a Commodore 64 and had no idea what they would unleash. More than thirty five years later, **MAT ALLEN** is a notable member of the Commodore community and scene under the handle 'Mayhem', part of the GameBase64 preservation project, with arguably the most complete Commodore cartridge collection known. He has contributed to ZZAP! 64 during both its original era and the two fan-made magazines, together with several other Commodore related publications, and once again brings his own brand of insight, wit, experience and judgement to the table in assessing some of today's popular releases.

Be afraid, be very afraid...

CHRIS WILKINS has been around in retro circles for some time — first dabbling in retro events, then retro magazines, and then retro books with none other than the editor of this very 'issue' of ZZAP! 64. He has now settled into producing yearly publications of yesteryear Newsfield magazines that are aptly called Annuals. He got his first 8-bit computer back in 1982 after nagging his parents for an arcade experience in the bedroom — he had to wait a good few years before that actually happened. These days Chris plays on the current gen systems but finds himself collecting all the systems he wished he'd had as a kid. There is always the next purchase — there is still so much to collect. (I have a very understanding wife!)

ANDREW FISHER — The writer behind Professor Brian Strain's technical column in the pages of Commodore Force (incorporating ZZAP! 64), Andrew worked on fanzines and diskmags (including the long-running Scene World) through the 1990s and 2000s before becoming a regular in the pages of Retro Gamer. His retro gaming collection grew over the years, but the C64 remains his first love. In recent years he has composed music for new C64 titles, acted as a game tester and curated a website dedicated to SEUCK. In 2008 he published his first book dedicated to C64 games and has contributed to several retro books since (as writer & proofreader). He is delighted to be involved in the ZZAP! Annuals and the relaunch of the mag.

WOTCHIT BIGMAN!

Whatever your platform of choice, it's probably fair to say that 2021 was the best year for printed games magazines in decades. As well as the return of this hallowed mag, we've had the reintroduction of AMTIX!, the introduction of a stand-alone ZZAP! AMIGA mag, and the consolidation and strengthening of CRASH, along with the wide-ranging scope of FUSION magazine which continued to blaze its own unique gaming trail throughout the year.

ZZAP! 64 was THE name in Commodore 64 magazines back in the day, so with the Commodore 64 scene flourishing so wonderfully, it's only right that it has returned. Now, as then, the magazine is staffed by incredibly enthusiastic individuals who hold a deep love of the 64, and we all thought it might be nice to have a look back on the first year of the new ZZAP! 64, and the C64 scene in general.

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ZZAP! 64

COMMODORE

COSMOS DESIGNS
We take a look at all their games

SOUL FORCE
ADVENTURE TRAIL WITH COLIN BELL
10 REVIEWS PLUS PREVIEWS

The return of ZZAP!64 magazine

Andrew: It's an honour to be part of the revived ZZAP!. With so many new games to review, I feel we are capturing the spirit of the old magazine, even if not everyone agrees with our scores. And behind the scenes it's fun arguing with Paul (just kidding!).

Paul: The arguments are fun, though! And they do serve an important purpose. It's all about coming to a collective agreement over our ratings. We may not be 100% right every time, but at least we follow a consistent process to get where we end up.

Mat: Some may say we could be too harsh, or could be said others are too lenient towards less than stellar games out of some loyalty to the scene. However reviews are opinions at the end of the day, and in the words from a certain movie song, we just choose to let it go.

Paul: It wouldn't be ZZAP! 64 without the odd review controversy! What readers need to realise is these aren't just randomly assigned scores. We all play every game for ages, then before every issue goes to print we have a long chat (lasting several hours, sometimes over two evenings) to come to a consensus about each and every score.

Mat: It does require a level of self-management and time commitment, more than

many people might realise. Thankfully Chris just lets us get on with it most of the
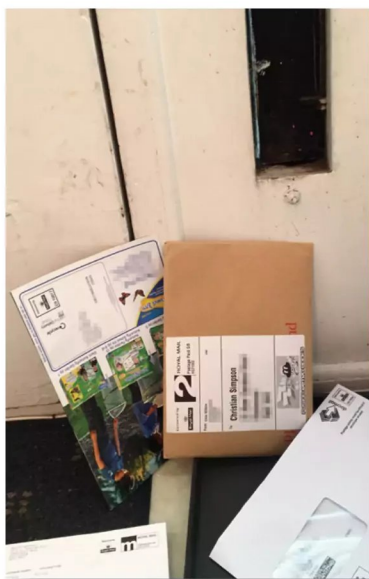
time and only occasionally needs to crack the whip! Evidently given the level of Patreon subscribers (looks at

CRASH, yes some rivalries never die) we must be doing something right.

Christian: I want to thank every one of you reading this, and my esteemed teammates, for welcoming me and letting me fly through your own letterboxes (or mailboxes!) four decades on. It really means the retro world to me. 2021 was quite a year for me. We lost mum during the year, but she was so happy and proud to have got to see me become a reviewer for ZZAP! 64 before she passed. She remembered the mag coming through our letterbox every month in my teens, and even took a photo of the new one to text to me when it landed through that same letterbox nearly 40 years later.

Paul: It is genuinely a dream come true to be part of the ZZAP! 64 revival. The mere fact it's possible is astonishing really, but the rate at which people are pumping out top quality, professional games gives us all great hope and belief that this magazine is here to stay for a long time to come, and we're all committed to making it better all the time.

The year in C64

Christian: Now for the important stuff! The Commodore 64 games! It's always hard to pick a top 5 as I've been asked to do. And it's important you know how difficult it is to give a rare "thumbs down" to a game that someone has undoubtedly worked so hard

PAUL'S TOP 5

1. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
2. THE BRILEY WITCH CHRONICLES
3. PLEKTHORA
4. LEILEI RELAY
5. RUNN 'N GUNN

ANDREW'S TOP 5

1. THE BRILEY WITCH CHRONICLES

2. SUPREMACY 30TH ANNIVERSARY

3. EWE WOZ 'ERE DX

4. LEILEI RELAY

5. OYUP

on. I think I only gave one this year (the other one was an editorial glitch when my "medium" avatar drawing wasn't ready in time for the final draft — whew I copped some flak for that I tell ya!). But please know I appreciate and respect just the fact that new games are even being made for our beloved C64 at all, regardless of any subjective scoring.

Mat: Certainly there were enough wonderful games to keep us busy, and a newly discovered desire to find REU compatible units. And in a couple of cases, Stalag ZZAP has helped improve games too (see *Polar Bear in Space*).

Robin: It's been a great year for the C64 and that statement in its own right makes me proud of what the people in the scene have

done. *Runn 'n Gunn* is my favourite of 2021. The concept of switching characters works really well, giving a nicely crafted, visually stunning errr run and gun a tactical edge although I still blindly panic when that blasted drone chases me!

Paul: *Runn 'n Gunn* was an excellent release. I especially appreciated the thought that went into the two control methods... it really meant you could tailor the way you played to your own style. Carleton Handley's C64 comeback was quite spectacular... it's a shame it looks like he'll have less time for it in the immediate future.

Andrew: I was impressed with *Night Knight*, as a debut project and a conversion. It has that classic *Bubble Bobble*/single screen feel and a good sense of progression with the password system.

Robin: *Night Knight* is a great conversion of the MSX original and had an insanely addictive gameplay, I'm glad the C64 is getting conversions from the MSX as they play so well.

Paul: I think we were all quite charmed by *Night Knight*. One game I really loved last year was *Plekthora*. For me, the smooth handling and interesting scoring mechanism really hit a sweet spot. I'm still having a lot of fun with that one.

Andrew: Excess really delivered with the *Supremacy* 30TH Anniversary edition; it uses the EasyFlash format

to provide the definitive take on the classic strategy game, with handy mouse controls added and an excellent intro based on the Amiga version. (I still prefer the C64

version of the intro music by Jeroen Tel though).

Robin: The likes of *Leilei Relay*, and the retro classic duo of *Frogger* and *Galaga* are worlds away from R&G but kept me hooked. In particular I loved the pixel perfect precision needed in Leilei.

Paul: I'm right with

MAT'S TOP 5

1. THE BRILEY WITCH CHRONICLES
2. SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
3. RUNN 'N GUNN
4. POLAR BEAR IN SPACE
5. NIGHT KNIGHT

you on *Leilei Relay*. It's not a long game, but it handles beautifully and really has that "one more go" factor.

Andrew: I helped playtest *Ewe Was Ere DX* before release, and so I didn't review it for the mag, but it felt just like classic Jeff Minter/Llamasoft with its ovine hero and tough blasting action. For puzzle game fans there was plenty of choice but my pick would be the colourful *OYUP* — it's *Puyo* on the C64, with fiendishly difficult opponents at higher levels.

Mat: The year was bookended by two fabulous releases from Sarah Jane Avory. *Soul Force* showed itself to be one of the machine's best horizontal scrolling shooters, plenty of levels, weapons, challenge and fun resulted in a 95% score. The same given to *Briley Witch*, which proved which witch was best and demonstrated the breadbin could easily handle the JRPG format in a wonderful game world full of humour and snark.

Andrew: *The Briley Witch Chronicles* is a true landmark release, an impressive JRPG and a further example of Sarah Jane Avory's skill with the C64. (And so different from her shoot 'em ups — if you haven't played

Soul Force you absolutely should!) I love the changing soundtrack and the beautiful character portraits. With two sequels and an Amiga version on the way, I look forward to spending more time with Briley and her cat Smokey.

Paul: I think Mat's cheating a bit by including *Soul Force*... I left it out as it's technically a 2020 release (albeit only just). It is awesome, though. And so is *Briley Witch*.. a really impressive game which deserves all its plaudits and sales (over 1,000 to date!). The aftercare has been stellar too... lots of patches to address small niggles, which I know the community appreciates.

Robin: I'll admit *Briley* isn't my cup of tea (not a fan of JRPG style combat), but I very much appreciated the quality and effort put into it. *Briley* rounded off Sarah's year in fine style.
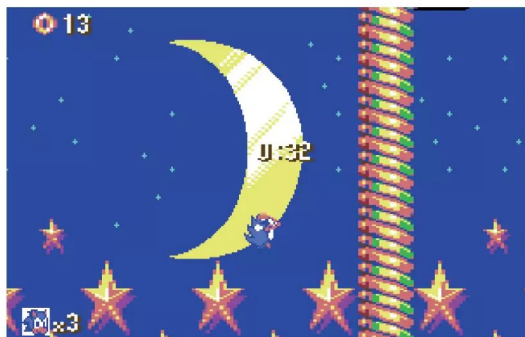
Paul: Of course, we can't end a look back at 2021 without mentioning *Sonic*. What an amazing Christmas present that was! I love it when fantastic games appear out of the blue (ho-ho) but this one was a real shock. It looks, sounds and plays like an absolute dream, and hints that there's still very much more to come from our 8-bit wonder.

Mat: What will 2022 bring? First person RPGs hopefully…

Paul: There's certainly one on the horizon that we're all keeping an eye out for...

Christian: Happy 2022 everyone! I'm looking forward to testing more games for you this year, hopefully including one from a certain franchise close to my heart in a galaxy far, far away...

ROBIN'S TOP 5

1. RUNN 'N GUNN
2. LEILEI RELAY
3. FROGGER/GALAGA
4. NIGHT KNIGHT
5. THE BRILEY WITCH CHRONICLES

"GOOD GAMES NEED A LOTTA ROOM— SO TURN THAT PAGE!"

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
Mr. SID, 2021, £free + RAM Expansion Unit (REU) required

SEGA! The sound of that immortal word billowing from speakers will revive memories for many people; in a lot of cases from being introduced to a certain speedy blue hedgehog. His task is to defeat Robotnik's robot minions, free all the furry friends from his clutches, and if possible, locate the six Chaos Emeralds hidden around the world for the "true" ending.

Sonic C64 is a port of the Sega Master System release, with six zones in total each comprising of three levels or acts, the third being a boss fight against Robotnik himself. Left and right move Sonic in the relevant direction, and fire performs a jumping spin attack, which can also defeat most enemies. Pressing down while running will produce a ground-based spin attack instead.

Being hit by any hazard removes all the rings in your possession; coming a cropper without any rings means the loss of a life. Accruing 100 rings in a stage awards an extra life, but finishing a stage with between 50 and 99 rings takes you to a bonus pinball

M.A.

I was always a Mario fan over Sonic, but similar to being a Commodore owner that didn't exclude me playing Spectrum titles. Ten years ago Andreas delivered a superb port of Prince of Persia, and now we have this. Frankly, it's hard to believe the port has been achieved, retaining all the speed and colours from the original and is an absolute joy to play. The graphics and sound have been accurately Commodore-ised in the process too. Your longevity may vary depending on how much you like Sonic, and that it isn't massively long or difficult compared to the Mega Drive game. Conversely, this Master System version is sufficiently different to its bigger brother that it's likely to be a whole new experience for many anyhow. It may sound that I'm not as gushing as my colleagues, and boy do I not gush, but it's impossible to deny this is an incredible achievement and should be widely heralded as such.

bumper-based stage where you can earn more lives and Continues to be used

P.M.

I used to play the Game Gear version of this on the bus to work in the 90s, but I never thought I'd see that exact game on the C64. Not only that; because the REU has been used, this is no crippled facsimile, but a genuine and true representation of Sega's mascot. What's even better is that although this is a conversion, the attention it's been given means that this IS a Commodore 64 game, make no mistake about that. It feels like it was specifically designed for our favourite machine, which is about the highest compliment I can give. The graphics and sound are nigh on perfect and full of Commodore charm, and the game plays like a dream. I can hardly believe it to be honest, but the evidence is here and it's glorious. Just play it.

should you receive the dreaded "Game Over".

Running the game under NTSC compared to PAL will result in a faster experience, both gameplay and music wise, but due to fewer CPU cycles will be subject to occasional slowdown and stuttering scrolling.

WHAT'S AN REU?

While the REU was a required extra only for NTSC owners of Sam's Journey, it's required for all players of Sonic.

Standing for RAM Expansion Unit, the REU unsurprisingly expands the memory available to the computer but it's the fast Direct Memory Access (DMA) aspect that is vital for the scrolling and colour performance of the game.

An REU with at least 256K RAM is needed for *Sonic*.

Sam's Journey was incredible and Sonic is on par. BUT, it's also such a beloved franchise that's today spawning hit movies and even a Tesla in-car game, that I think we should take a moment to applaud the monumental task Mr. SID chose to take on board. It could've gone badly but… Sonic is a triumph. Whilst admiring the buttery smooth super-Sonic-ally fast graphics I thought, "Welp I guess my Ultimate64 is an Amiga now". Yet when the digitised Sega jingle played at the start I thought, "Welp I guess I've finally got a Sega"! That's what he's done here. I won't discuss Sonic itself because we all know & adore it, but this port gets everything right. The game warned me it might be juddery on NTSC but I barely noticed. If you do, play it in PAL! Oh the options… And speaking of Sonics, the music & SFX are sublime. Mr. SID has rarely sounded so good (the chip not the dev). I'm in love. With a hedgehog. On a 40 year old format. A prickly situation of the best kind!
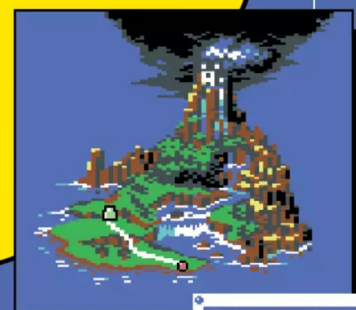
GREEN HILL

Fret not if you cannot acquire the genuine article from the 80s, modern hardware solutions such as the Ultimate2+ and Turbo Chameleon also emulate the REU. And if all else fails, there's direct emulation such as VICE.

PRESENTATION 90%
Fastload, on-disk manual and "install to REU" option for seamless play (if you have more than 256K). Plus that superb SEGA! intro

GRAPHICS 95%
Sega graphics take on C64 charm, with smooth, full-screen scrolling and detailed character sprites.

SOUND 95%
Enhanced SID versions of the Master System tunes, a truly epic soundtrack coupled with brilliant FX and that famous sampled speech.

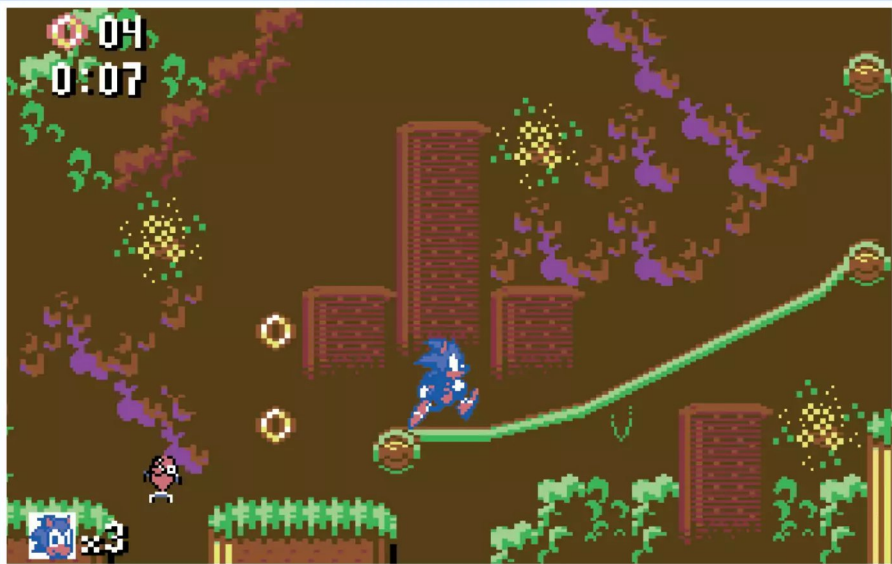**HOOKABILITY 98%**
So easy to pick up and run with.

LASTABILITY 94%
There's Chaos Emeralds to find, high scores to chase and speedrunning records to aim for.

OVERALL 97%

A stunning, state-of-the-art conversion of a classic console game.

The ZZAP! Interview

If you don't know this is out by now, you are living under a rock or still reading Fusion Publications' plethora of releases over the Christmas period. *Sonic the Hedgehog* is available on the blue screen, courtesy of Andreas Varga (*Prince of Persia*), Oliver Lindau (*Caren and the Tangled Tentacles*, *Rolling Ronny*) and Mikkel Hastrup (*Super Bread Box*, *Soulless*, *Canabalt Unofficial*).

Whilst mostly a direct port of the 8-bit version from the SEGA Master System, there are some improvements such as no auto-scrolling in act 2. This is the first game that has been exclusively designed for the REU, with about 64 KB of code hand-translated from the Z80 to the 6502 architecture.

ZZAP! 64's Jazzcat (David Simmons) goes one on one with the coder Andreas Varga (Mr. SID) to uncover more on this monumental release.

Jazzcat: Why Sonic?

Mr. SID: I'm not sure... It's always been on my list of things that would be cool to do. Because it's a big and well-known franchise, and I like slick and smooth console platformers. Those things don't really exist on the C64, so I've looked at it in the past a bunch of times, but only after SMB64 came out, I decided to give it another go.

Jazzcat: When did you start this and is this a one-man show? Who has been involved and in what capacity?

Mr. SID: I did the initial amount of work myself until I had a playable game that included all levels and enemies. I then asked Encore (Mikkel Hastrup) if he could help with the music and Veto (Oliver Lindau) to work on the graphics. I had a basic set of converted graphics that I used for testing, and he pretty much replaced every pixel in that by hand. Other people jumped in at the end to help with testing... oh, and I started in May 2019 for real, just after SMB64 came out.

Jazzcat: What are the technical details behind this? I mean, is it using some VSP like with *Mayhem in Monsterland*, *Another World* or something else?

Mr. SID: No, it's quite basic really. I already knew that you can make an unlimited scrolling engine with an REU. That means that instead of the typical 8-way scrolling of most C64 games, you can scroll in any direction at any speed, with no limitations to colour usage and a game like Sonic requires that. The relief was finding out that all the levels would fit precisely into the REU bank sizes, which made it easily possible. So, it's unique in that way, that the whole screen (without

SEGA™
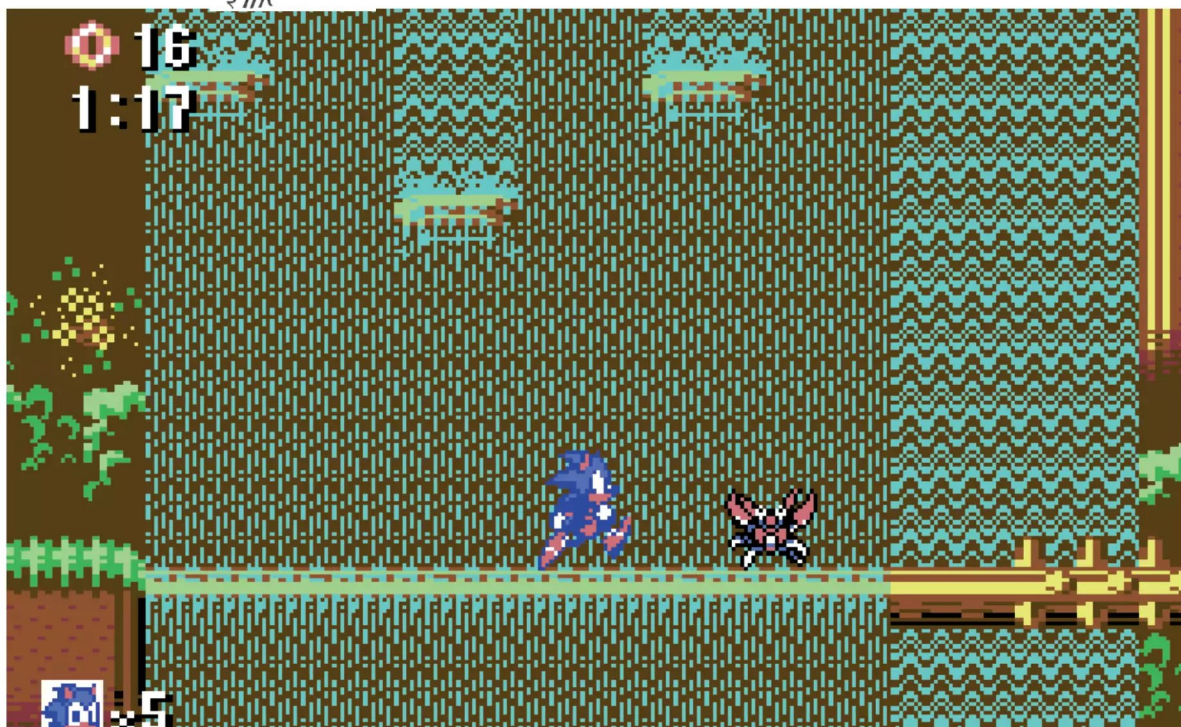
any static HUD) can scroll in any direction at any speed. It's quite unusual on a C64.

Jazzcat: What is the REU size required?
Mr. SID: I require 256KB to run the game (with levels loaded from disk), and 512KB to fit the whole game and thus not requiring any further disk access after the title screen...

Jazzcat: As we know, this is the first game ever on C64 exclusively making use of the RAM Expansion Unit, were other REU productions over the years inspiring you here (Expand/Bonzai came in 2020, but we know Crest did some cool stuff such as BluREU)? Or was it that you

looked at Sonic and thought, what can I leverage to execute this on C64 and then REU came to mind?
Mr. SID: No, other REU demos didn't influence this. I had the idea for this type of game engine long before any of those, probably in 2011 already. I was just not sure if I could do a whole game with that, and wasn't sure if *Sonic* is not too big a bite to chew...

Jazzcat: How important was the REU decision? Could there have been some solution using on the fly disk load?
Mr. SID: Without REU, this wouldn't have been made. The *Sonic* that runs on C64 without REU would be a

lame and sucky game, not worth making.

Jazzcat: How many sprites can the multiplexer deal with, and what was your approach to sorting and spawning?
Mr. SID: The multiplexer can do 24 sprites, with priority, colour and x-expand support. Sorting is traditional, and it's quite stressed, so not entirely glitch-free. But it's the best I can do.

Jazzcat: What have been the challenges, the more difficult hurdles that you had to overcome?
Mr. SID: Mostly the sheer immensity of the task. This is not a small game, it's about 64KB of Z80 code, more than 80 different enemy and

interactive object types. Translating all that from Z80 to 6502 takes a long time, and requires constant testing and bug fixing. And at the same time, all the graphics have to be done in C64 spec to allow the game to be built and played. It took many months to do that.

Jazzcat: What does the use of REU add, is it just using the DMA, not the RAM, and how would the gameplay be without it?

Mr. SID: It's using both the RAM and the DMA. For example, every frame of Sonic's animation is streamed in from the REU, so is the music when a jingle is being played. But even the game code is using DMA copies to put things onto the zero page, so that processing can happen more quickly. Once you can rely on the REU DMA being available, you can use it to speed up all kinds of things. Without the REU, none of the game would fit (Sonic's animations alone are about 20K and wouldn't fit into a VIC bank) so it would look a lot crappier and run with the usual C64 scrolling speed, e.g. 4px per frame or so at best. That would be a different game then, so not desirable...

Jazzcat: Any chance of making the music play at the "correct" speed for the PAL version too?

Mr. SID: No, there's no room on the disk for another set of tunes and this is how it is supposed to play in 50Hz.

Jazzcat: Has anything been added to this version over the original Master System release?
Mr. SID: Not added, but we've removed some of the more annoying "features", such as the auto-scrolling in Bridge Act 2, and the limited down scrolling in Jungle Act 2. The game is more enjoyable without them...

Jazzcat: I doubt this has had Sega's blessing, but I will ask anyway... do you expect any wrath in the form of the witch hunt post SMB64's release?
Mr. SID: SEGA has a pretty relaxed stance on non-commercial fan projects... there's even a whole Sonic Amateur game festival (SAGE) every year where people show off their Sonic fan remakes and mashup games...

Jazzcat: Moving to the graphics process. I asked Veto (Oliver Lindau) to provide some info on what was involved, was there dithering? What was involved given the original and the limitations of the C64 etc?
Veto: Originally the plan was to revise the existing graphics of the original game directly since the tile composition and the level map was already given

and Andreas also provided prepared assets. At a second glance, however, it was more effective to recreate the level graphics from scratch by hand — while keeping the original graphics by Ayano Koshiro in mind. "Tileset is king and shouldn't be changed" (I broke the rule a few times though), with the chars I was allowed to act flexibly. The greatest effort is now in the background animations, which have been completely recreated. Stylistically, I held back with dithering, as the graphics also thrive on purist patterns and coloured surfaces. The procedure for the sprites was rather straightforward, as Andreas had already illustrated well. I mainly reworked the contours of smaller objects such that the original shape comes out more clearly, which ironically also led to an NES-like look. I re-pixelated larger elements like Doc Robotnik or the capsules at the end of the level.

For the title screen, there was a different approach. The basis is a classic multicolor bitmap combined with a few sprites for additional colour details. In the lower part of the graphics, the background colour was manipulated line by line and individually interwoven with details.

Jazzcat: I guess because of the lack of colour RAM

"E VIVA!"
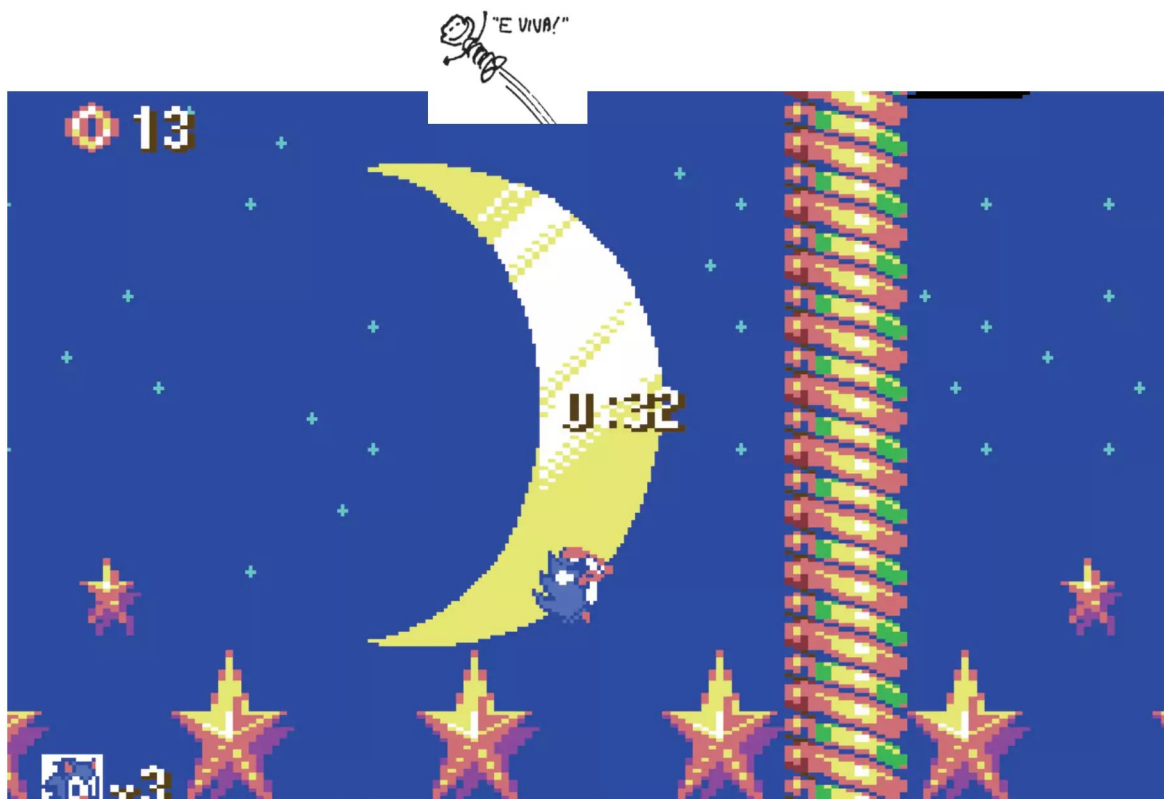
usage restrictions, you had some fun mixing multicolor and hires?

Veto: Yes indeed. Overall, you are usually quite limited in terms of the number of colours. One can work out clean contours for this or add more details to surfaces. With *Sonic*, I split the backgrounds into two layers, so to speak, so that the background landscape is primarily shown in hires pixels while the foreground level is more multicolored. I think that supports the depth effect a little and helps not lose the overview as a player during the fast-paced parts.

Jazzcat: And the music, did you have thoughts to include samples and go even further?

Mr. SID: No, that wouldn't

have fit the game. Just good old SID music and sound effects.

Jazzcat: Could you also look at the 128-acceleration mode here? Different graphic mode, further acceleration potential etc.

Mr. SID: It's being used... not much to mention. It smooths out the places where too much stuff is happening and makes NTSC somewhat playable.

Jazzcat: So, the player has an improved experience on C128+REU over C64+REU?

Mr. SID: If possible, I would play on a C128, it's going to be better, yes.

Jazzcat: How much time per frame goes on running the game code, and were there

any "interesting" CPU usage spikes that needed dealing with (thinking of things like the expensive setup times for the sprite muxer that Armalyte had to cope with whenever a boss arrives)?

Mr. SID: Yes, there are many places where the game does more than it can handle... in the original, it will slow down, on the C64 I try to skip the frame and run at 25/30fps instead. The game code can easily take up half the frame or more.

Jazzcat: In closing, will we see a dev blog on this and does this release open up potential future follow-ups (sequels etc.)?

Mr. SID: No, there won't be a sequel and no dev blog, as I'm quite busy and won't have time to write anything.

TEST

WILLOW PATTERN — JOLIE EDITION
Greg Duddle, C64 Mark, dmx and Jolie Jones 2021, £free digital

Cast your mind back to those ubiquitous pretty blue porcelain plates with the fantasy story pattern, and it lays out the tragedy also told here. Princess Koong-Shee is being forced to marry someone against her will, and her actual love Cheng takes it upon himself to infiltrate the palace and elope with her instead.

On his way he will encounter sword-throwing Samurai Warriors as well as giants who guard the

I have a soft spot for the original, so it was with deep nostalgic interest that I dived into this one, although at first I really couldn't notice any differences aside from the new options. It's fair to say the changes are subtle; softer, less grating music (with the option to turn it off), eight-way movement and enemy tweaks are the noticeable improvements. Unfortunately the game's main issue still remains; go the wrong way and you find yourself trapped with no way to defeat an enemy blocking the path. This makes mapping imperative, which is great if you're into cartography. I'm not, so the game soon palled. The trainer options make it worth playing through once, but that's enough.

My first impression was this was more Speccy Booty than reboot, until I realised that A) they were both Firebird games, and B) this is intended only as a faithful update with neat enhancements. And at that mission it succeeds nicely. But let's be real, it always was a very simple game. Then again that is its charm. I love the Chinese theme, but after a while that repetitive music takes the "c" out of charming. Ouch. I felt bad for the SID chip. DMX "softened" it for this version, which is a good start, but doesn't go far enough. For the other fixes I have no complaints; I always love me some good invincibility options! Willow Pattern 2021 makes the original look like a shadow of its former self, but it's still more ZX Spectrum than 2021 C64. Recommended… for fans of the original.
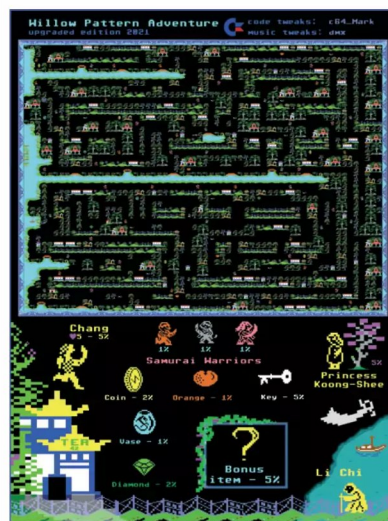
river crossings. Items can be collected on the way including a key which gives access to the Princess' hiding place and assorted items of treasure. When he has Princess Koong-Shee, Chang must race back through the maze pursued by Li Chi, Princess Koong-Shee's furious father, until he reaches a boat, and safety.

The Jolie edition fixes or improves a number of aspects from the original release including diagonal movement, being able to complete the game 100%, a new ending, and built-in cheat options.

JOLIE EDITION

SANTA'S WORKOUT

Vector5, 2021, £free digital

Poor old Santa has a problem in the run up to Christmas, he's a little bit out of shape. Your job is to control Saint Nick across 24 levels in an effort to get fit so he can then take off and deliver gifts all around the world.

The only ability you have is creating ice blocks in front or directly underneath. Due to his weight Santa cannot jump, but he can survive a fall from any height. Sacks positioned around each level allow you to create more ice blocks, and collecting the presents along the way adds to your score. In your way are various obstacles such as snowmen and trees, and be careful around those
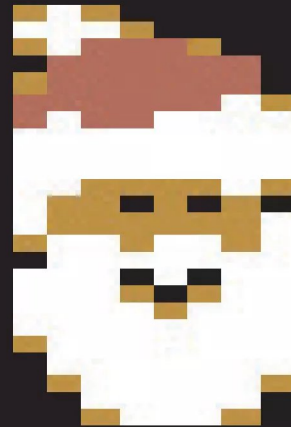
holes, it's a long way down!

Dying or having to restart a level due to running out of ice blocks removes one life, and losing all of them means it's game over. On completion of each level you are given a password to be able to continue from that level in the future.

R.H.

As if Santa doesn't have enough on his plate delivering pressies, now he has to give his brain a workout in this pleasant little headscratcher. It's deceptive though, you may occasionally have a few routes to the exit but you're always at the mercy of a very tight block count. No room for error here. The password system is a double edged sword. If you use it the game doesn't last long but I think the frustration felt if you chose to restart the entire game because of one misplaced block would drive anyone insane. Fortunately, I used it and enjoyed a short but sweet festive puzzler.

PRESENTATION 76%
Passcode system and neat in-game menu, with a simple ending.

GRAPHICS 67%
Chilly-looking, simple but effective.

SOUND 60%
Limited to FX and jingles in-game, but nice title and end screen tunes.

HOOKABILITY 78%
It has the gift of playability and head-scratching.

LASTABILITY 63%
May not last more than Santa's usual term of employment — one night.

OVERALL 70%

Better than a pair of socks for Christmas.

P.M.

This reminds me ever so slightly of Solomon's Key with its game mechanic, but I don't enjoy it nearly as much as that classic. That said, it's not a difficult game – I completed it on my first go – and there's scope for maximising your score if you feel like working out the optimal routes. I like the jaunty title screen and end screen music but feel that the game sorely misses an in-game soundtrack – more SID-ified Christmas classics would have really added a lot to proceedings. One to play with the little ones on Christmas Eve, methinks.

M.A.

You may be reading this in January (or February) but the game was played during Advent to keep that festive spirit. Initially there was some confusion and frequent deaths getting to grips with the mechanics. However once the Lode Runner style nature of puzzle solving became apparent the game was rapidly completed, but that's only half the fun, as the levels are designed to encourage you to collect as many of the sacks and presents as possible. As each present results in a large score bonus on reaching the end, it's perfect for high score chasers too. Give it a workout and see what you think!

Wouldn't you know it? For the umpteenth time, the universe is in trouble. Who's the only ones that can rescue it? THE RAD PILOTS!

Oh, and you. Well, the Rad Pilots may have the equipment, but they're going to need your skills and guidance. Isn't that always the way? There are three pilots, and each represents a different difficulty and set of levels. The wise gamer will start on the easiest level, because even that is more difficult than the average mortal can handle.

Enemies will appear from any side of the screen they wish and they take a varying number of shots to destroy. To add complications to the proceedings, most screens also feature platforms or barriers. These obstacles usually reflect your shots, and if you shoot yourself, you die. If an alien shoots you, you die. If you crash into an alien or a barrier, you die so you're going to have to work very hard just to stay alive, let alone save the universe!

The game is tied to a soundtrack album of the same name, released by 8 Bits High. Featuring twelve tracks, it's available on vinyl or cassette from Static Records; however, you can also listen to it on Spotify and Apple Music if you're not a physical kind of person.

Well, Misfit's games definitely come under the "tough" category.

There are familiar elements from previous titles such as Crazy Blaster, including the way bullets bounce and the wacky names for each level. It took a couple of games to really get into it, but I soon started to appreciate how well-tuned the difficulty is — and the great music composed by Finnish band 8-Bits High. It's not going to be to everyone's tastes, but hardcore blasting fans should definitely check it out — as long as they don't raise their blood pressure too high!

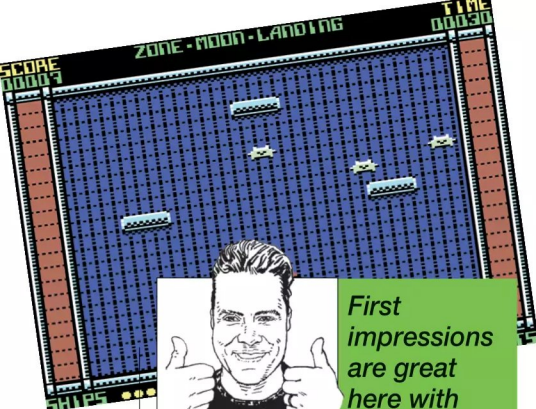*I dunno, I'm not too keen on this one. Even on the easy difficulty level it seems unnecessarily hard to me, and there's not enough action to make it worthwhile. It takes a lot of practice to get the hang of, and I'm not sure that the gameplay is worth it. It's bad enough that the slowly-wibbling aliens fire at light speed, but bullets (including your own) ricochet off platforms for ages, boxing you in and making you a sitting duck. You need to learn exactly what each enemy does on every level and to me, that makes this more of a puzzle game than a shmup. I'm not a big fan of puzzle games, and I'm not a big fan of this.*

First impressions are great here with colourful screens, a choice of pilots, and a thumping good soundtrack. The graphic style reminds me of Arkanoid — one of my faves — and visually it also makes good use of the borders & some other tricks. Speaking of which the actual gameplay had me bordering on pulling my hair out! Don't get me wrong, there's a great variety in the levels, it's just that its difficulty is dialled up too high compared to many other offerings that are thus more enjoyable. Plus there's nothing particularly new to see here. It still has fun to offer though, especially for those who love a challenge on reaching for their Hi-Score. I just wish it had a difficulty option.

C.S.

PRESENTATION 76%
Stylish attract sequence, choice of pilots, three levels of difficulty with high-score table saved to disk.

GRAPHICS 77%
Simplistic but stylish sprites, with clever background flourishes.

SOUND 84%
Rocking music and beefy sound FX, but can get a bit repetitive.

HOOKABILITY 68%
High difficulty makes it tricky to get into at first…

LASTABILITY 70%
…but plenty of levels to beat and higher scores to chase.

OVERALL 73%
Another hardcore title from Misfit that might not appeal to everyone.

EWE WOZ 'ERE DX

Bitmapsoft, 2021
£35 — cartridge
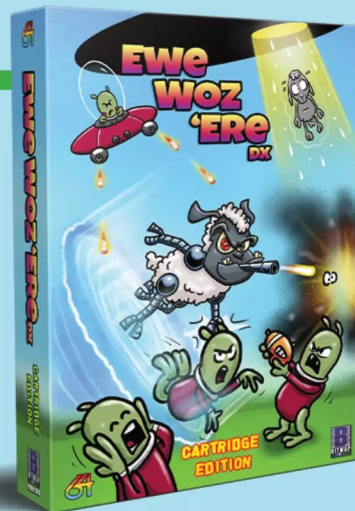**available digitally from**
$3.99
https://bit.ly/3Av32Du

Poor Baaary. All he wants is to chew the cud in peace, but an invasion led by the evil combat lizard, Traazk, has endangered his fields and all that lovely grass. There's no time to feel sheepish about it... Baaary must drive these intruders from the pastures if he's to have a peaceful life. Fortunately, Baaaza is a combat sheep, and his spit is plasma-charged, meaning a few good hits are enough to see off even the hardiest of foes.

To save all his fields, Baaary must collect charges from dispatched aliens to open gateways. Once a gateway is opened, he has a limited amount of time to reach it and pass through it. Doing so will clear the level and take Baaary onto the next. If he's too slow, the gateway will close and he'll have to collect more charges to reopen it.

Some aliens will drop time capsules when shot, and collecting these adds one second per capsule to the time Baaary has in which to reach the gateway. Others drop power-ups, giving different weapons to our splendid sheep. These take more energy to fire though, and if Baaaza runs out of energy he dies. Eating grass and shooting enemies replenishes energy, but overindulging will see Baaary explode! Baa-lance is key, so eat, shoot and leave the enemy scum in ruins!

Jeff Minter has inspired many games and programmers over the years, but few have worn their inspiration as proudly as Ewe Woz 'Ere. It's a little bit Sheep In Space, a little bit Iridis Alpha, but with its own original elements thrown into the mix. Frolicking and gambolling through the fields spitting laser death at invading enemies is always fun if done well, and Ewe Woz 'Ere DX is done very well. The different weapons help you tailor your own playing style, then just when you think you've got it sussed the environment changes and forces you to adapt again. If you're a Llamasoft llover after a new fix, do yourself a favour and buy Ewe Woz 'Ere DX... it's the most baa-baa-blaster seen on the C64 for many years.

P.M.

ZZAP! **TEST**

At first it was reminiscent of Star Paws, Sheep in Space, or Nodes of Yesod but it soon becomes clear that it's less deep (literally) but in many ways more original and unique (dare I say "weird"?). More Star Hooves than Paws perhaps. Notable novelties include standing still long enough to eat some grass which increases your energy but decreases the actual grass in the field — a clever balancing act of stat bar vs. real item. And when you collect enough objects to open a gateway to each new level, there's that adrenaline rush as you race to the portal before the ticking clock times out. And it's those rushes that can keep you mentally hooked. Add to that a nice "restart best game option", Paradroid-esque SFX, and much more, and I wooled certainly recommend that ewe don't be sheepish and instead grab this — it's a great game in the field.

ENERGY

TRAAZK

SCORE 008110

I am presuming the programmer is a fan of Jeff Minter as he could baaaah-ley contain his desire to homage some of Yak's favourite fluffy animals, along with gameplay elements from Sheep in Space and Iridis Alpha to boot. No bad thing considering, as both the eat to gain energy and energy level balance mechanics in themselves are quite ingenious. First couple of worlds ease you in, then it throws the desert level at you and makes you think about your tactics again. Everything comes together really well, it just lacks that tiny bit of polish to elevate it to SIZZLER.

PRESENTATION 87%
Superb tutorial, restart best score and unlockable nightmare mode, with readable status panel in game.

GRAPHICS 81%
Fun, colourful and smooth scrolling with a decent variety of enemies.

SOUND 75%
Familiar-sounding FX suit the genre, and pleasant if forgettable music.

HOOKABILITY 88%
The straightforward blasting action is instantly addictive.

LASTABILITY 82%
Keeps ewe coming back for more.

**OVERALL
83%**

A great game in its field, you're not getting fleeced if you buy this one!

ENERGY

SCORE 001970

The best game inlay covers of 1987

In the fifth instalment of a feature that celebrates the artwork of C64 games, Graeme Mason discusses six more of his favourite covers from 1987.

Phantasie III: The Wrath Of Nikademus
SSI

American developer/publisher SSI consistently created great covers for its games, and this RPG from 1987 is no exception. The scene is a dank dungeon with the muscled dark necromancer of the title fending off an attack from several heroes. To the left, a kindly looking wizard casts a line of electricity at the villain while two more party members battle bravely in the foreground. In front of them lies another hero, desperately reaching across the cold stone floor for his spiked club. With another laying prone to the right, it's clear Nikademus is more than a match for this group despite the efforts of the swordsman and wizard. It's a dramatic scene, yet my favourite aspect is the shadows to the back, dancing across the grimy dungeon walls and portentously reflecting the violent events taking place.
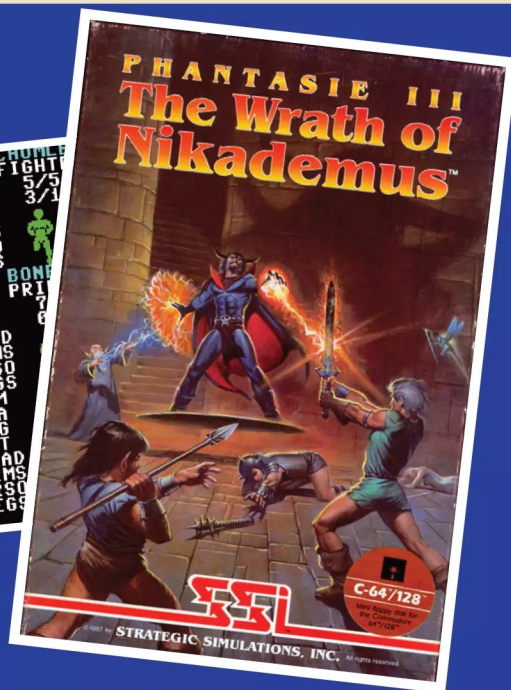
Darkhorn: Realm Of The Warlords
Avalon Hill

I admit that this isn't the most original or striking of game covers but there's one wonderful element that compelled me to include it – which I'll get to in a moment. Firstly, the main scene. A group of heroes are making a desperate escape from pygmy-like enemies. A warrior to the right has his arms stretched out in pain while the central figure lashes out at another opponent. Behind this scene, multiple figures battle in the shadow of a pointy mountain, a castle to the left. The height of the mountain is emphasised by a bunch of wispy clouds circulating around its summit and it's these clouds that contain the particular highlight of this image. Above the castle, a ghostly and skeletal face peers across the valley, studying the escaping figures. Formed from innocent clouds, this visage casts an ominous and sombre tone – defeating this ethereal villain will not be easy.
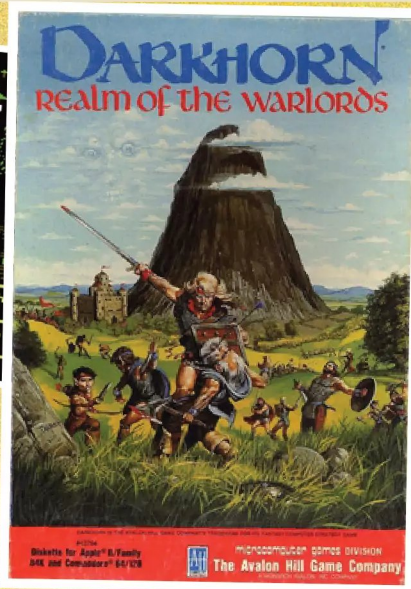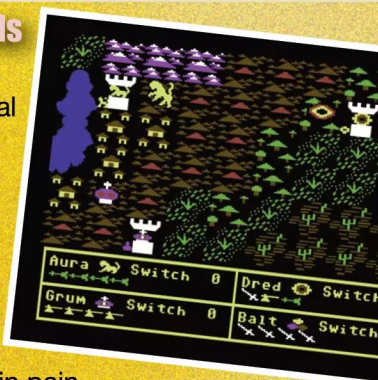
Demon Stalkers
### Electronic Arts

I love a good *Gauntlet* style game and the cover to *Demon Stalkers* leaves you in no doubt as to its genre. The most striking element is its novel top down angle that gives the viewer a bird's eye view of events. The central figure – presumably the player character – is holding what looks like some kind of crossbow, poised to defend themselves against the wraith-like creature that whirls nearby. Interestingly, the ghost's trail leads back to small square unit, suggesting that *Demon Stalkers* employs the same monster generator mechanic of the majority of Gauntlet clones. To the left and right of the hero, groups of rats stand ready to pick at the bones of any vanquished victim while a treasure chest glows temptingly nearby. To the north is a ladder leading downwards, and the message is clear: dare you explore even deeper into these hazardous dungeons?
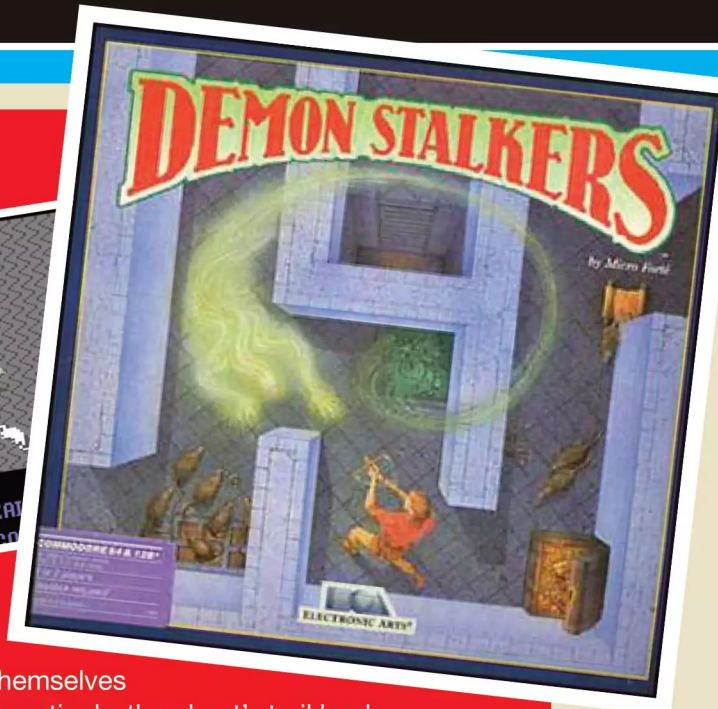
Black Magic
Datasoft

I'm sticking with the mystical and fantastical theme with this game from Datasoft. An evil wizard named Zahgrim has transformed his rival into stone but not before removing all six of his eyeballs. Now that is evil, and it's the player's mission to retrieve the eyes and place them back in the eye sockets of the petrified statue. The cover image of *Black Magic* reminds me of the movie Labyrinth: a bleak and dense forest between the player and their destination, an angular castle and the wizard's statue, those six vacant holes are enough to give anyone a bad case of trypophobia. Troll-like figures lurk inside the woods, ready to pounce on an unsuspecting victim, but it's the sharp mountains in the distance that intrigue me. Are those… eyeballs on top of them? A fascinating image, full of detail and mystery.
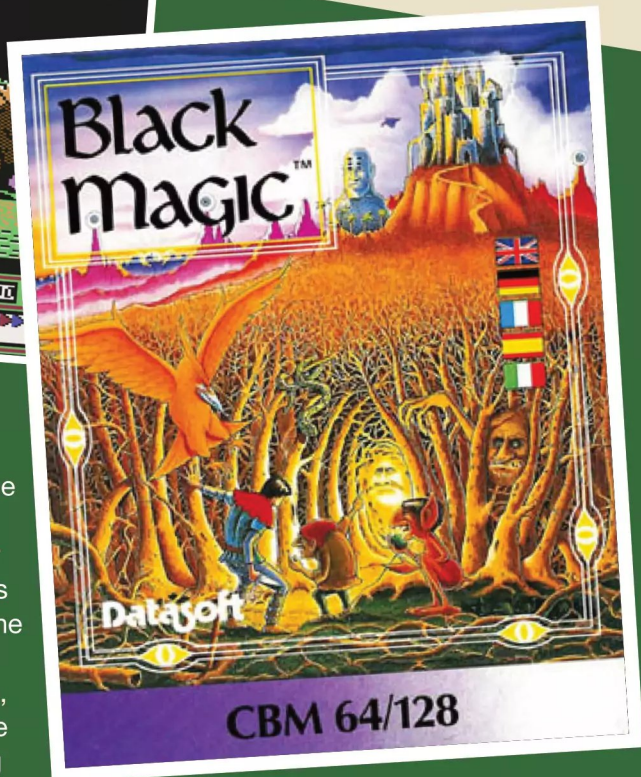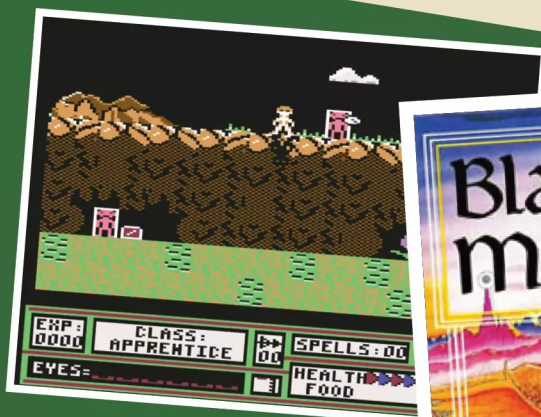
Mountie Mick's Deathride
Reaktor

Phew. Time for a change of tone and what better way to lighten things than with a spot of train-based varmint disposal? The fugitives in question are the outlaw McClusky gang, fresh from robbing the Trans-Canadian Express train of its stack of gold. Naturally the intrepid Mountie Mick sets out to stop them, jumping over carriages and shooting down any dog of a gang member that crosses his path. As a comic fan in my youth, this cover greatly appeals to me. A daring Mick takes down one of the gang with a pithy put-down as the train steams onward. Dominating the foreground is Mick's next opponent, his pistol at the ready. It's an effective cross of the two different medias, reinforced with the craggy red letters of the game's title. Looks like there's plenty of shootin' and tootin' to be done before these villains can be brought to justice.
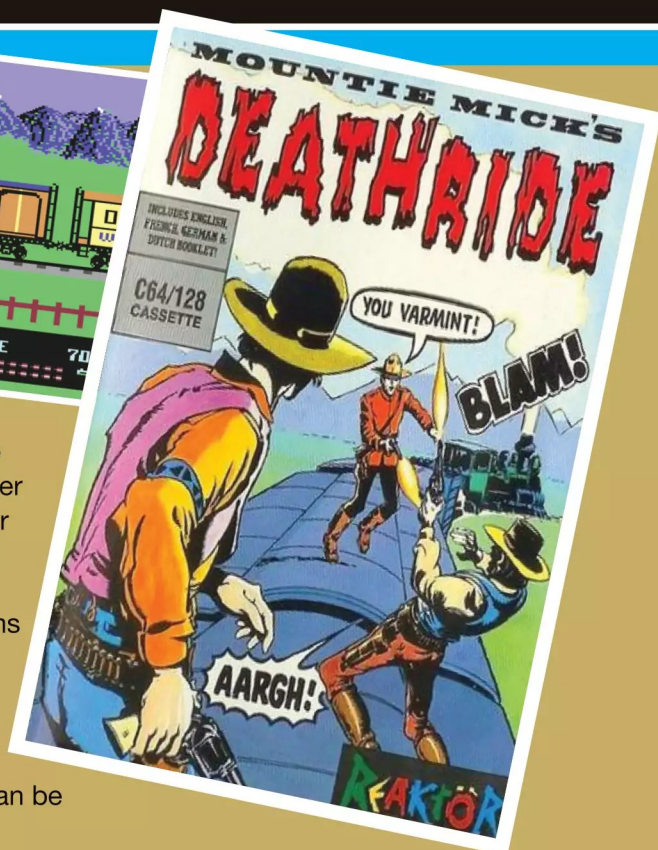
Wizball
Ocean

Finally for this issue we have one of Bob Wakelin's finest works for Ocean, *Wizball*. As with many of Bob's pictures, it's a neat summation of many of the key parts of the game: the pipes and segments of the world sit at the bottom of the picture while one of the game's power ups floats just beside Wiz's round globular transporter, the nominal star of the game. A jet black cat skulks to the right – is that Wiz's cat? – while the catelite transporter whizzes towards the front of the image. But my favourite part is the evil wizard, arms aloft as he sucks the colour from Wizworld, his kindly white beard at odds with the nefarious task he is performing. Another fine cover from Bob Wakelin that couldn't have failed to make potential buyers wonder just what the hell is going to happen in this game, and want to find out.
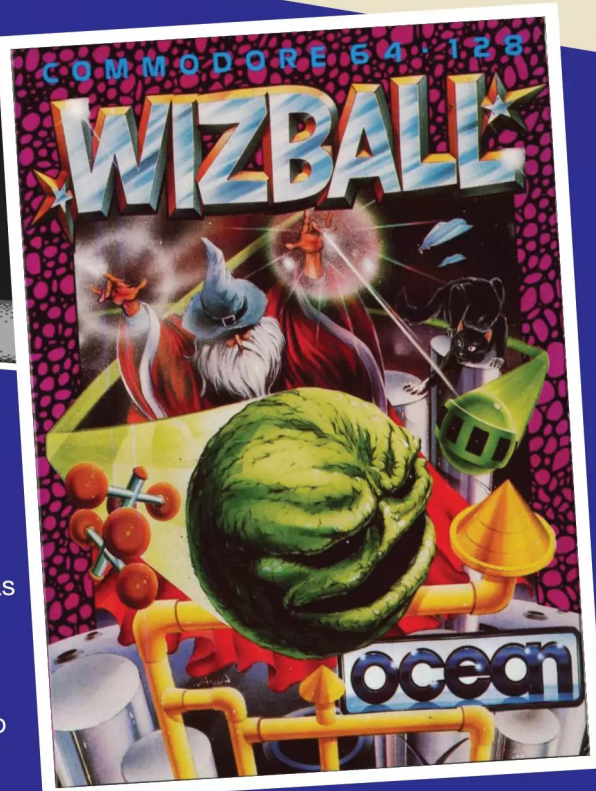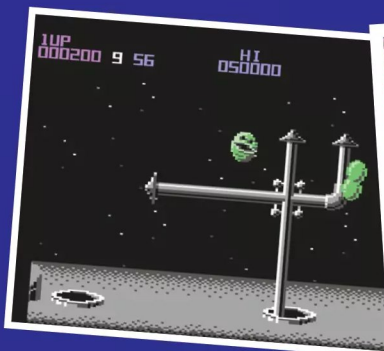
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ZZAP! 64

Games that weren't But now are...

Those games that got lost in the trenches of time, now dug out and released to the fans of Commodore 64 gaming today!

Spectrum owners had it lucky with their Jetman series. They had *JetPac*, a fantastic single-screen shmup where the Jetman had to build his craft and blast off to new levels. Then there was the sequel, *Lunar Jetman*, which ramped up the difficulty and added land-based rover shenanigans. They even had a Jetman comic strip in Crash!

What they didn't have was the next game in the series, *Solar Jetman*.

NES owners had it, and Commodore 64 owners

were supposed to have it but publishers Sales Curve neglected to publish it and the game disappeared. Fast forward thirty years though, and here we it is! The game disk was actually discovered in 2020 and released on the Games That Weren't 64 website for us all to enjoy... as long as it's an enjoyable game. Let's find out if it is...

The game sees Jetman exploring planets to try and find the missing pieces of the fabled Golden Warpship. Legend has it that this ship will allow

interstellar travel, although if Jetman is searching different planets for bits of this ship, hasn't he already achieved that? Oh well, maybe the Golden Warpship makes it faster or has fluffy dice, or something. Anyway, there's one ship piece on each planet, along with some other useful bits and bobs. It's all there for the taking, but the alien defence mechanisms (and different planetary gravity forces) will do their best to stop you...

This has been a really hard game to evaluate. I've played it a lot to formulate my opinion, and I'm still not 100% sure. It has one major issue... the gravity and inertia don't feel quite right, the way they do in Thrust. Picking up an object can make your ship so heavy that sometimes it almost feels impossible to move. I know each planet has its own gravity, but it can feel quite unfair. That said, it's still an intriguing game to play. Discovering new things is addictive and I was compelled to try and make progress, especially once I was able to make upgrades to my ship. I enjoy the game despite the apparent control/gravity issues (which could just be me being rubbish), but with a bit more polish it could have been really special.

PRESENTATION 82%
Good password system, and the multiload isn't too annoying.

GRAPHICS 74%
Effective without being earth-shattering.

SOUND 72%
Nice title tune from Mike Follin, but the in-game sound is merely average.

HOOKABİLITY 78%
The early stages are a struggle, but the huge task is captivating.

LASTABILITY 91%
Despite the difficulty on some levels, the exploration is compulsive.

OVERALL 85%

A large and compelling challenge will reward the persistent player.

ZZAP! Creation

by Paolo Rathjen

During the latest Christmas vacations I had time to finally do stuff I love, simply for the fun of it.

Pushing pixels is almost a meditating experience and, as usual, the mind starts to wander while the small coloured rectangles slowly fill the screen.

While the first "Loom 64" illustration — printed in Issue 1 — was mainly a labor of love with a glimmer of hope, now I am more convinced it could really become a Commodore conversion.

There's more than enough memory on a cartridge to fit all the areas (some backgrounds would need a bit of trimming...) and the close-ups during the more important dialogues...

Mark Ferrari did such an amazing job with the EGA palette that still today I consider it superior to the later released VGA: sometimes less is more.

The luck of having the Commodore palette matching almost perfectly the EGA one is counterbalanced only by its odd resolution.

The double wide pixels sadly grate a bit of the cleanliness of the game's vivid art.

Nevertheless, the result is really easy on the eyes and it makes me quite excited about producing all the remaining sets.

The main problem I can see is using the limited number of available sprites to represent all the NPCs that can be found in the game. Luckily most of the time there's only a couple and only in the image I created here does Bobbin actually meet more than two.

There are a number of techniques and workarounds to present an experience as close as possible to the first 1990 release, but that's a problem that I can face once more pixels have been pushed...
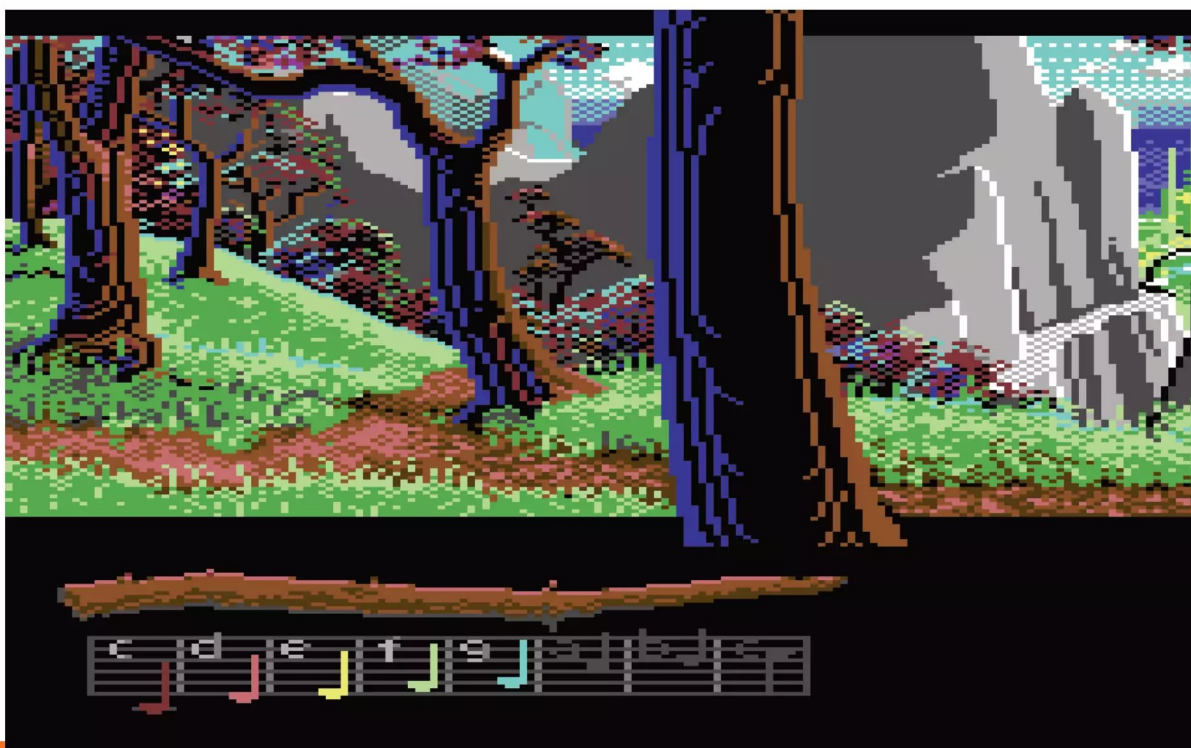
Another year squirreled away in the photo-album of life and here we are once again to peruse some perfectly placed pixels for the first time in 2022.

It's a cold rainy January morning but hopefully the choices I have made will warm your cockles and start the year with a smile.

Let's open the gallery doors and step right in.

1: Technovikings — iLKke — 2017

There's more than a healthy dollop of skill and creativity here with great character design throughout.

The Vikings ooze insanity with their bizarre headgear and from what we can see of their faces, their dental regime obviously needs a serious rethink.

The longship, while far from long is a masterpiece of creation. It appears to have been repaired on many an occasion and contains pipes and metal parts from another age.

The solitary shield hung over the side suggests our raiding party to be woefully ill equipped for action.

I would love to see more of this quartet. The bizarre world they inhabit with its barren wastes in the background and mechanical fish is superbly executed and intriguing in the extreme.

2: Giantesses — Animal Bro — 2016

This is a beautifully rendered image, which combines the surreal and the sensual. Graceful lines and delicate colours give an almost pastoral feel to the piece as the strangely disproportionally sized women elegantly dance across an otherwise bleak and barren wasteland while partially revealing their ample bosoms. There is a lyrical innocence suggested by the clasped hands and the female on the left throwing her head back in abandon, letting her locks stream as they cavort. The focal point, for me at least is the inclusion of the spoon held delicately to the far right. An intriguing inclusion in a wonderful picture.

3: Sovjet Sentrifug/ Ghost Cosmonaut — Duce — 2021

Ari Seppä from Finland brings us this superb and slightly haunting hi-res image.
 The delicate details throughout are fantastic in their simplicity. A line here or there suggests a crease in a glove or a valve in the cosmonaut's suit.

 The lurid colours of the skull are framed by the darkness of the helmet's interior. That central image is balanced to perfection by the dissipating colours to either side.

 What exactly is happening is anyone's guess. Is this a lost voyager with the upraised hand a memory in time of the last moments of life?

 The energies emanating from the helmet certainly suggest something, but what?

4: Vinyl Tribute #2 — Joe — 2021

 This wild and psychedelic image is obviously for the SID chip lovers, which probably covers every C64 owner out there. If ever a visual representation captured the magic of sound then this is up there with the best.

 The bizarre figure holding the venerable chip front and centre is either the recipient of the majestic soundwaves that are flowing dramatically into its head or conversely the source of the same.

 The power in this work is the limited palette and the confident lines throughout. The curves and diagonals move your eye with abandon, with no one part holding you for more than a few seconds.

 Stark, severe and sensational.
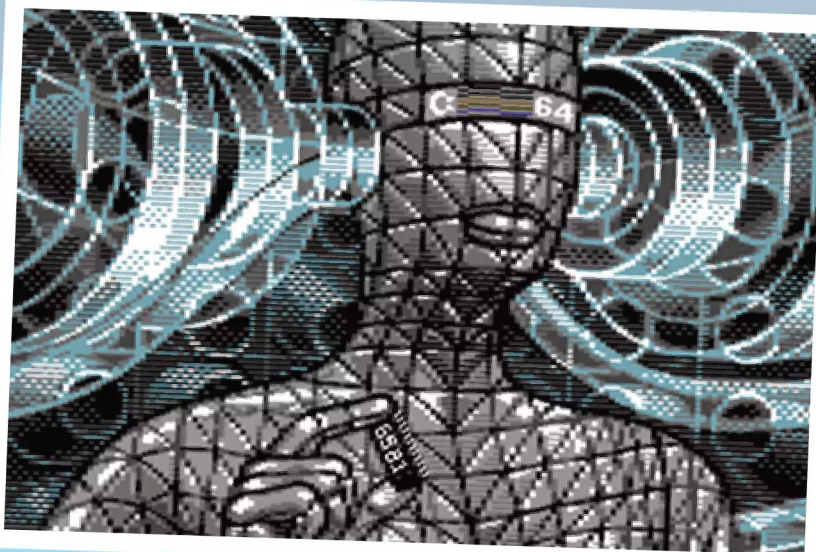
ZZAP! RRAP

You came back! We had some great letters for this issue — straight from the heart no doubt. Keep them coming to me via: chris@fusionretrobooks.com
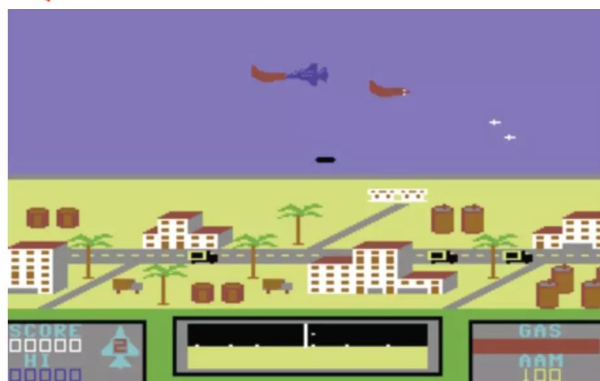
FALCON

Hi Lloyd,
Great to see ZZAP! back! Missed you Guys, Love the Magazine and the Reviews and Features are nicely varied, REALLY Like the ZZAP! BACK section.

Question — Would it be possible for one of your ace reviewers to do a Feature on a "forgotten programmer" — Steve Lee for instance, he produced the mighty *Falcon Patrol* and others and then... Nothing. Would be lovely to see what happened to him and maybe an Interview too, and maybe you could get some other older coders too — Geoff Crammond, Archer Maclean, The Rowland Brothers etc. Also perhaps you might talk to some developers — Psytronik immediately springs to mind, Would be nice to see what is upcoming from them. Anyway enough waffle from me — keep up the good work, Your favourite nutter,
Wayne :->

Some great suggestions there Wayne. I have swung by the Editor's office (broom cupboard) and voiced all your points loud and clear! Over to the Ed now! Watch out for news on Psytronik in the next issue.

LM

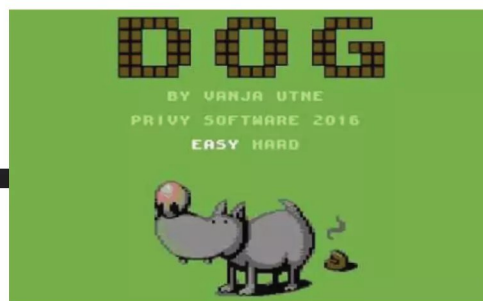JUST WHO **IS** THIS LLOYD MANGRAM?

WOOF WOOF

Hi Lloyd,
Just wanted to say that me and the missus are loving ZZAP! 64. Who'd have thought all this time has passed and we still love firing up the 64, although I have a disk drive now so games load so much faster than before. Thank you team for making a pair of 40 somethings feel like kids again.
Cheers,
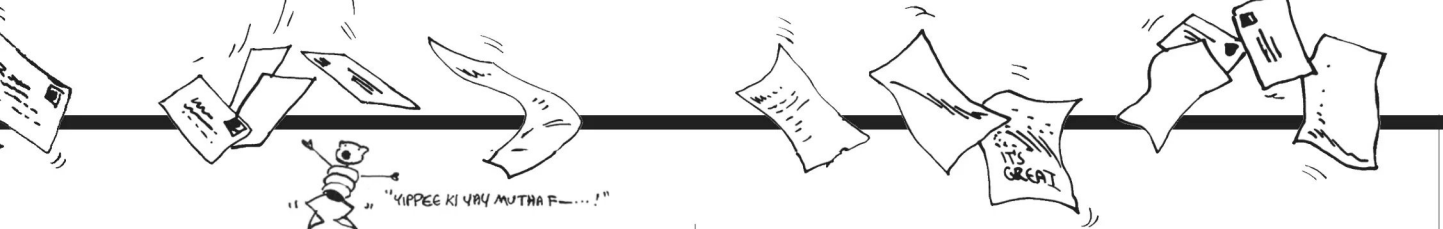Graeme, Annette and Bert the dog. Woof.

It's so good to see Bert enjoying ZZAP! as well guys. We suggest he plays the game Dog — it seems appropriate!

LM

DOG
BY VANJA UTNE
PRIVY SOFTWARE 2016
EASY HARD

WE LOVE YOU TOO!

Dear Lloyd,
Wow!! A new issue of ZZAP! 64 only days before my 45th birthday! Yes please! I first owned a C64 back in the mid eighties, then my parents decided to swap it for a ZX Spectrum (silly fools), so I gained an appreciation for both over the years. In the early nineties I was able to get a C64 again and collected quite a few games for it, enjoying the rear end of our beloved computer's life, playing *Creatures* and making things on the *3D Construction Kit* and begging for the day I could own *Mayhem In Monsterland* or *Lemmings*.

Of course, at the time I never did, and next thing I knew, Commodore was no more and games became bargain bucket fodder and then were gone.

I sold on my beloved collection out of a need for money. In the mid 2000s, as my kids were getting to the age where computer games were an interest, I managed to get hold of a C64 again and introduced them to as many games as I could find. Now, who'd have thought, our beloved computer is making a comeback, we're seeing regular new games like *Sam's Journey* and *Isle Of The Cursed Prophet*. Imagine my delight that with this resurgence came the news that ZZAP! was coming back!!!

So glad to have you back in my life again and have loved the articles and reviews. A blast from the past and a gift to the present. I wish you all the greatest success. From one very happy reader.
Mark James.

wipes tear from eye — aww bless ya. We are pleased to back as well. Like a big old school reunion isn't it!
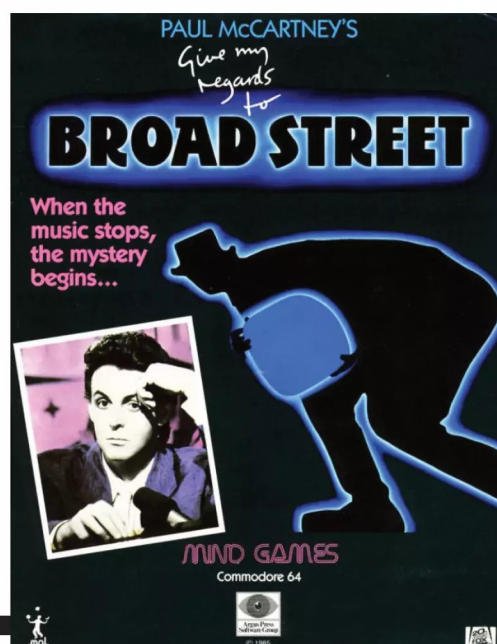
LM

LET IT BE!

Hi Lloyd,
I'm sure many people sat down last Christmas to watch Peter Jackson's 'Get Back' documentary about the Beatles over a cup of tea and a couple of selection boxes, but how many people went as far as digging up Paul McCartney's *Give My Regards to Broad Street* on the C64 like I did? You'll need the original instructions to get anywhere with the game, it's a kind of Macca-based *GTA*. Now I'm keen to find more of the same; as well as *Frankie Goes To Hollywood* and the *Thompson Twins Adventure.* Are there any other 80s pop stars who graced the beige breadbin? I know Frank Sidebottom wrote some code, but I'd love to find a Status Quo shoot 'em up or a Thomas Dolby RPG I haven't heard of.
Dennis

What a great idea Dennis. I'm a big fan of Adam and the Ants. There couldn't be, could there?

LM

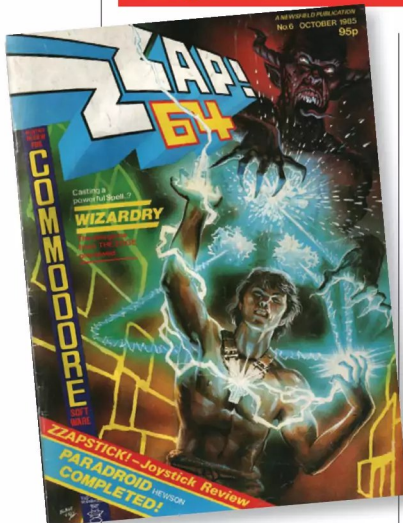PAUL McCARTNEY'S
Give my regards to
BROAD STREET

When the music stops, the mystery begins...

MIND GAMES
Commodore 64

ZZAP! Issue #6

I HAVE THE POWER!!

Apologies, that's not He-Man on this month's cover, it's the lead from the soon to be released game, *Wizardry*, of which you'll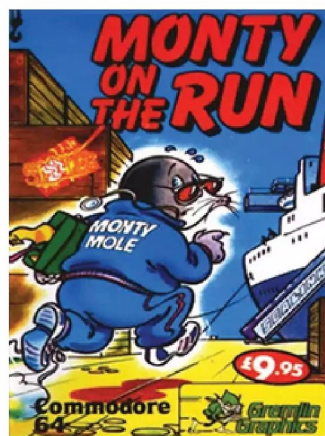 find a preview of inside. I should have guessed it wasn't everyone's favourite loincloth wearer — he's not blonde for a start, and where's his giant scared cat? That evil demon lurking above his head is a little more terrifying than Skeletor too, I guess. The appearance of this guy would have both He-Man and Skeletor running the other way, I would wager. He really is the stuff of nightmares, so before I look at it too much and end up in therapy (again), I think I'd better turn the cover and find some nicer, less evil things to look at…

A ARRGGHHH!!! *Jack Charlton's Match Fishing* competition reminder?! Are you actually trying to give me a heart attack, ZZAP?!?! 'Look the other way, Paul, just keep your eyes at the top of the contents page, ok? You can do this.' Who said that? Probably that bloody evil monster on the cover. Well, at least it's not Jack Charlton trying to make me win a copy of his fishing game. Anyway, let's move on and look at what else is in this issue. In terms of games, we have a review of Gremlin's latest mole-based game *Monty On The Run* which, based on the headline, features 'the best mole music ever heard.' Nice. Another sportsman gets his name on a game in the shape of boxer Barry McGuigan — will his game be a knockout? Or will it feel like going 12 rounds with Ali? A couple of DIY games feature this month too — tired of the same old pinball games with the same layouts and those erm, bell things and springs (Can you tell I don't play pinball machines?)? Well, be tired no more, as Electronic Arts have given us the opportunity to make pinball just as you want it with their *Pinball Construction Set*. Get those bells and springs zapping!

Oh the realism. Proud Jack!

TIME LEFT FOR MATCH TO RUN   3 (MIN)
FISHERMAN SEAN   PEG 2

Build it and they will come!
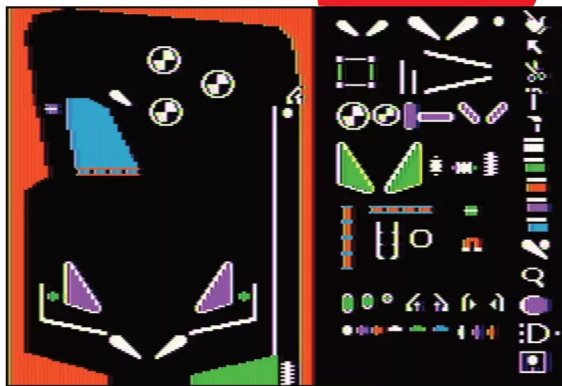
Also reviewed is the game I still haven't managed to get my hands on yet, *Spy vs Spy II*! I camped outside Smiths for four days last month waiting to get my copy but to no avail. Turns out the taxi driver took me to the crisp factory by mistake. Bugger. Rest assured I shall get my copy this week and here's hoping the review and game itself will make those four wasted days worth it.

Elsewhere, a review of the latest and greatest joysticks is with us on page 88, along with a feature on the people behind an upcoming game based on the Zoids toys. The usuals are here too, of course — the editorial, the happy little readers get to have their say

and a look at the Top 30 games too. Let's get cracking.

The editorial has an interesting, although also a slightly worrying narrative this month as it seems Newsfield Ltd., who publish ZZAP, and also CRASH, may be in hot water with another publisher who shall remain nameless. Okay, it's EMAP Business & Computer Publications, who publish magazines such as Computer & Video Games and

Commodore User. It's the mockery of one of their other magazines, Sinclair User, that has got Newsfield in some bother. What's happened? Well, the August edition of Crash featured an additional four-page supplement named Unclear User which was a tongue-in-cheek poke at the magazine, though EMAP haven't seen the funny side. Oh dear. They have now gained a court injunction to prevent the distribution of this issue of the magazine, unless the supplement is removed on grounds of breaching copyright — there's also a writ for libel. This could go horribly wrong for Newsfield though they will fight this as much as they can. Let's hope things go the way of Newsfield, eh? Don't any other publishers have a sense of humour these days? Tsk. What a bunch of L-Users.
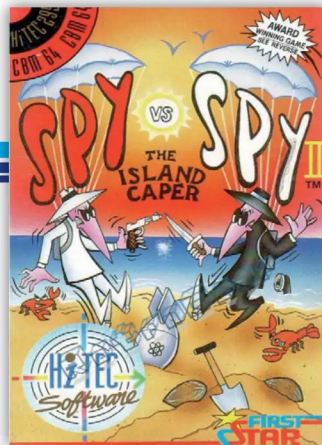
Letters. Let's pick one at random. 'Dear Editor. Are you stupid!!', and a very warm welcome to you too, Jas from no address supplied in Walsall — never heard of it. 'Why on Earth did you publish those pokes for *Airwolf* in issue 3 without realising their effects?'. Personally, I didn't see these though I would have thought that these POKEs would have only been a good thing given the ridiculously hard gameplay *Airwolf* affords. Apparently not. 'The first three pokes break down the turbo which enables games players to load in an assembler and save the thing.' You've lost me there Jas, get to the point and use plain English, please. 'In a matter of days, the game would have probably been circulated around Britain in its illustrious hacked form.' Oh, so an assembler lets you save a game in its entirety? Still don't really get it but hey, come on, if you were going to pirate a game and circulate

EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS
EXCLUSIVE ADVERTS
EXCLUSIVE EXCLUSIVES

unclear user
BRITAIN'S BEST SELLING SILLY MAGAZINE

EXCLUSIVE TITLE TO BE DREAMT UP

A NICE **MINDLESS** LITTLE EARNER

it, would you really choose *Airwolf*? Does anyone hate the Commodore 64 owning British public that much to want that many people living day after day of frustration, not being able to get past the third screen without using POKEs? Jas has annoyed me so I shall move on. Games!

Monty is on the run and whilst out galavanting from the Spectrum to the 64, he's managed to get his hands on a SIZZLER award, which can mean only one thing — this game must be a corker. Having managed to dig his way out of jail before his time was done, he is now literally on the run and you must guide

him to a boat that is somewhere on this land (or water, I guess) and make your escape…to another land, most probably. Though, this new land probably won't have the angry rozzers vying for his blood. *Monty On The Run* is no pushover in terms of difficulty and will see you squished and splatted over and over again as you make your way through the screens. A bit like the previous one for me then. Every reviewer here waxes lyrical about the music featured in the game, with many tipping of hats and dropping of jaws aimed in the direction of composer Rob Hubbard, who has produced his finest work to date. So, even if
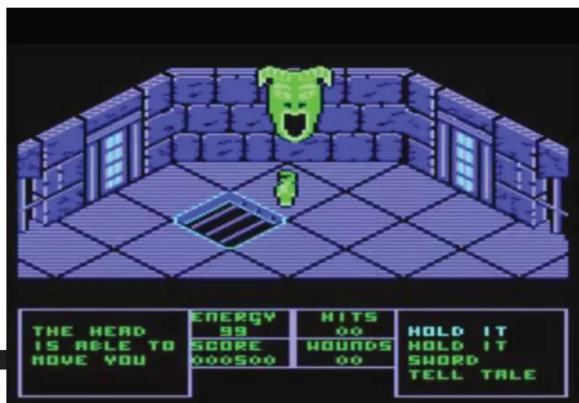

you do struggle to get past more than two screens (having *Airwolf* flashbacks again) at least you'll have some blinding tunes to listen to whilst you scrape yourself off the floor.

Monty may be good an' all but the game I want to see and play (you might have already guessed) is *Spy Vs Spy II*. I'm so very glad to see that it has also got itself a SIZZLER — was there ever any doubt? The general gameplay is roughly the same (no bad thing), though there are enough little tweaks, quirks and additions to this one to keep you as entertained as you

were in the first. *Spy Vs Spy II* is set on a desert island where you again take on the other spy as

you bid to collect all three parts of a top secret missile, before making your way to the submarine that is waiting for you in the water. Of course, you can still whack the bejesus out of each other with a stick but if you want to get creative, you can also set and build your own traps to foil your nemesis along the way. Fancy digging a huge hole in the sand for your arch enemy to fall into or perhaps you'd prefer to bury some napalm for him to stumble upon, leaving him as a steaming pile of ashes? Coconut bombs and snares are more death implements at your dispoal — this game

Escape Tunnel

just sounds better and better the more I read. A must buy, surely? Yes. Why are you even asking? Why am I even asking? DO IT!

The preview section features a lot of neat looking games that are headed to the 64 very soon. Of course, we've seen a glimpse of what might be of *Wizardry* on the front cover (my thoughts have turned to that evil monster again — argh! (or was that Jack Charlton?)) but also heading

COMMODORE 64

Wizardry

EDGE

By Steven Chapman

THE HEAD IS ABLE TO MOVE YOU   ENERGY 99 HITS 00   HOLD IT
SCORE 000500 WOUNDS 00   HOLD IT
SWORD
TELL TALE

our way is the conversion of the Spectrum's well-received *Sabre Wulf*, with Firebird taking over coding duties from Ultimate Play the Game. If you were a fan of the Spectrum version, then this is one to keep your eye out for. On top of that, Activision have been busy recently working on a project called *Pet Person*, which seems like a very interesting program indeed. The game sees you watch and interact with your own person (and pet dog) who 'live' inside your 64! This relies heavily on the computer's AI as your little computer person walks about the house and lives his life, whilst you have to look after him — making him eat when he's hungry, cheering him up

when he's sad whilst also commanding him to do other daily tasks — which include, perhaps most importantly, telling him to have a shower when he starts to whiff a bit. Sometimes there's no easy way to tell someone something like that, though that doesn't mean they don't need telling. A member of the team behind the game is none other than David Crane. Yes, that one. Yeah, the *Ghostbusters* guy! I shall be paying attention to this one over the next few months — let's hope ZZAP keeps us informed on its development, eh?

It's time to go *Commando*! Well, it's almost time, anyway. Err, I should probably clear that up a little bit by explaining that I am talking about the arcade hit *Commando* and its conversion to the 64 — though it will go by the name of *Who Dares Wins* here. Why? I'm not sure, but we can expect the same level of violence as the original, as you control the one-man-army, taking on hordes of

men and the tanks associated with them; plus you'll also have to deal with the motorbikes, water pools and the fortress doors at the end of each level where it all goes to hell. Lovely. There'll be a full review next issue but until then, as ZZAP themselves say 'You'll have to wait.'. Bugger.

A feeling of disappointment seems to me like a good angle to finish on as it means things can only pick up, right? It's only a little while until we get that full review of Command…sorry, *Who Dares Wins* and after a venture out to (WH) Smiths for me a bit later, I'll hopefully, and finally, be able to make my way to a desert island far away from here, get my hands on some napalm and blow someone to smithereens. By that, of course, I mean I'm off to buy a copy of *Spy vs Spy II*. You didn't really think I'd do that for real, did you? Pah! I'm not into that stuff in real life! Well, not anymore anyway…
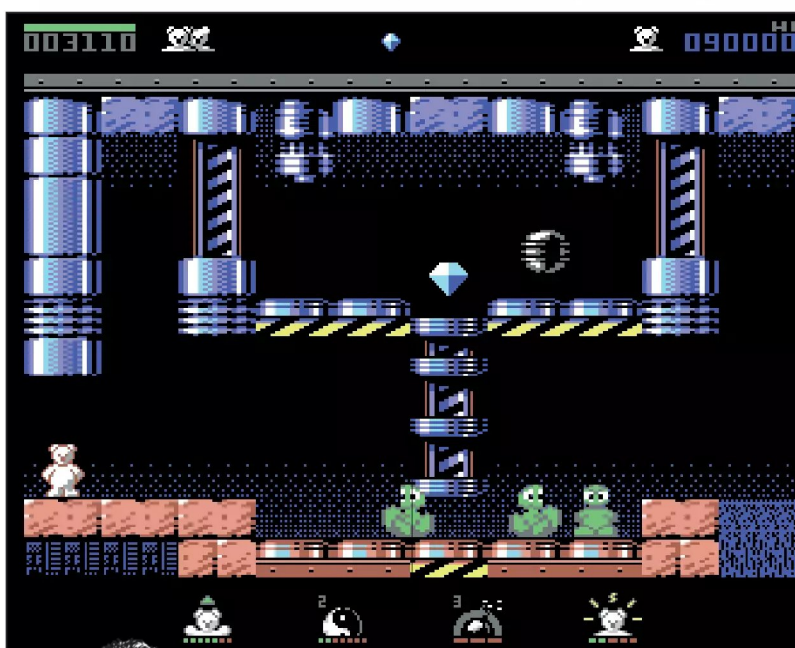
ZZAP!

POLAR BEAR in SPACE!

Psytronik/RGCD, 2021, $7 digital, £10 upwards physical

You're probably thinking "hang on, you reviewed this game in issue #4" and you would be correct. So what's going on? In light of the original review comments by messrs Allen, Morrison, and Fisher, there have been some tweaks and alterations made to the gameplay by the programmer. These include, but are not limited to, lowering the difficulty, preventing enemies from respawning, adjusting the

It's indicative of these modern times that within a couple of months, we have an updated version of this game which addresses points made in our original review. The gameplay tweaks are all for the better, resulting in a still-challenging but more balanced gaming experience. The frustrations from the original have all been addressed and eradicated, making for a much fairer and therefore more enjoyable experience. I have no hesitation in recommending this version of the game wholeheartedly; it's a much more satisfying gaming experience.

controls for the terminal puzzle, and more. So how do these changes affect the original score given?

Ding ding, round 2. These comments are taken in light of my original views so what's the story morning glory? Better, that's for sure. The terminal game is a lot easier to play now, you don't feel quite as harassed during the space sections, and the enemies staying dead in the bunker sections is a massive boon. They are still difficult to complete, but a whole world easier and less frustrating than before. So much so, I got further than I ever had previously on my first play of this version. Even more recommended!
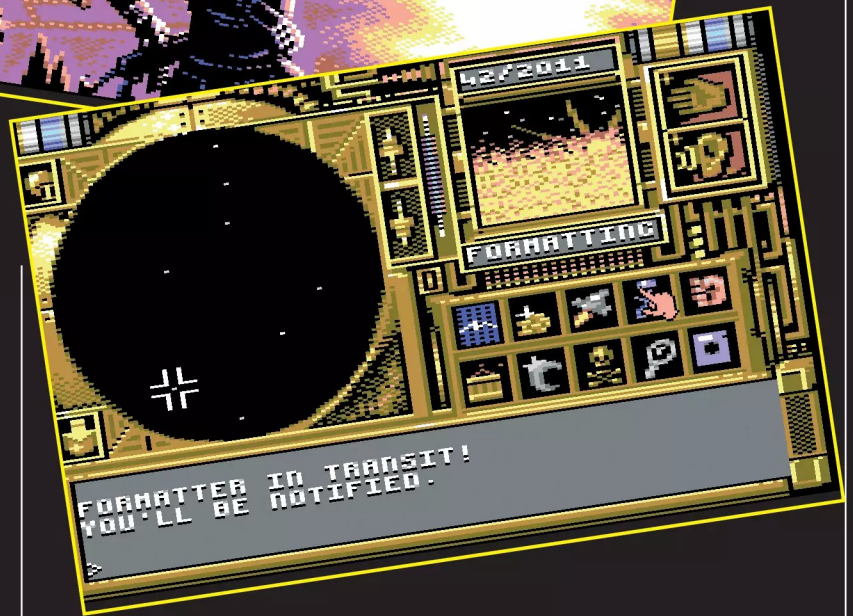
SUPREMACY
Excess, 2021
EasyFlash cartridge image, free download

Thy will be done, now as it was thirty years ago. Your aim is to conquer the galaxy and defeat the four alien races (with 8 planets at the lowest difficulty, increasing up to 32). Managing resources is crucial — people need Food, your machines need Minerals and Energy to run and vehicles need Fuel to travel between planets. Taxing your citizens will earn Credits to buy things, but set the rate too high and Morale will drop. Drafting citizens into Platoons is needed to take the fight to the

I loved Supremacy back in the 1990s — and I love this 30th anniversary edition even more! The EasyFlash format has allowed Excess to polish the game further, from Ste's superb bitmap to the gorgeous small animations in the planet window. Seeing all the types of armour and weapons in the Training screen might seem like a tiny addition, but ideas like the built-in trainers and the mouse control make this feel even closer to the 16-bit game. Nick Jones, Hugh Riley and Jeroen Tel created an amazing C64 version, but this takes it to another level. With four tough opponents across increasingly larger galaxies, there is a lot of depth here. Whether you get zapped or conquer your opponents, it is worth persevering with. A classic just got better.

SI**ZZ**LER

C.S.

The original compared remarkably well to the Amiga version but this enhancement of the number balancing strategy behemoth is even closer, which is an even more amazing thing. For those who haven't played it, if you know Shadowfire or other point and click icon-driven games, it'll feel familiar, even if the accomplished music isn't quite as catchy. To get started I easily flashed the game to the EasyFlash 3, plugged in the Commodore 1351 thanks to the added mouse support, and after several crack-style options, was greeted with the Amiga intro that's now in the C64 version! The next new thing I spotted (and there are a ton) was when equipping your soldier the items actually appear in the viewfinder (previously only the Amiga was deemed capable of that). Other welcome additions include the trainers, animations, and digitised samples. The C64 is getting closer than ever to being an Amiga, and we have Supreme revamps like Supremacy to thank!

enemy, choosing from different types of weapon and armour that govern your fighting strength (and the longer they train the better). Cargo Ships and Battle Cruisers help you move between planets, and the all-important Atmosphere Processor transforms

barren planets into liveable ones as you expand your empire. Different planet types have different resources to exploit. Spies can be sent to check on your enemy's progress, with regular messages informing you of what is happening in the galaxy. Sending your troops into

battle, victory will see them raise your flag over the planet. Become the overlord and rule wisely — or be disintegrated by your opponent should you fail.

R.H.

Having missed the Amiga version originally, I came to the C64 version blind, and it seems I have missed out on a great strategy game. Getting used to the different screens takes a bit of time but soon enough I was very busy indeed creating resources, moving ships and invading planets. The strategy itself is pretty simple but the constant juggling of assets with a limited number of docking bays, nervously waiting for troop training to finish while you're under attack and the hassles of food and fuel shortages, all while defending here and attacking there makes for quite some challenge. And that's just the first level. Add to it gorgeous graphics, making it one of the best looking strategy games on the C64 period, and lovely sound effects and you've got a really great game.

PRESENTATION 93%
Amiga-style intro, mouse control and polished pre-game options plus Ste's superb bitmap based on the packaging.

GRAPHICS 93%
The new animations and extras send the graphics into the stratosphere.

SOUND 87%
New intro tune alongside the classic, and decent sound FX for the genre.

HOOKABILITY 86%
The icon-driven interface makes it a breeze to get into, and getting your first victory will be thrilling.

LASTABILITY 90%
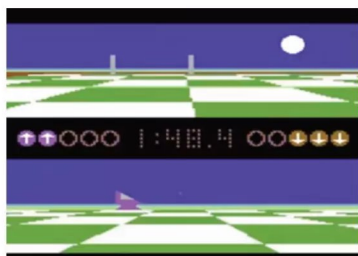Trying out strategies will keep you coming back to conquer.

OVERALL 92%

Thou will play Supremacy 30th Anniversary and love its strategic gameplay.

ZZAP!

"I'M NOT SCARED OF A BUNCH OF NATIVES!"

Ballblazer

Scoring a massive 98% in issue 9, Lucasfilm's futuristic sport sees players battling it out on a split-screen view of the 3D arena. While the game is a simple air-hockey-style one-on-one affair, with each player using a 'rotofoil' to try to knock the ball into the opponent's goal, there's a lot of skill involved, along with a fair amount of strategy. For instance, you can 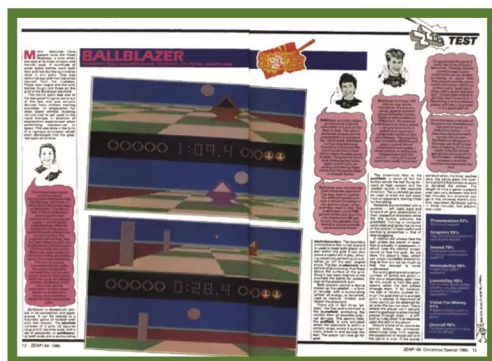rebound shots off the invisible arena boundary and extra points are awarded for scoring more difficult goals such as from long shots.

Barbarian II
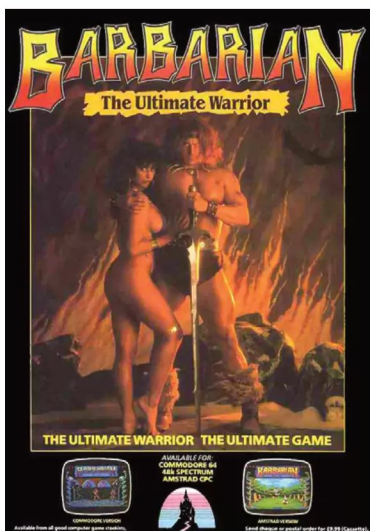
The original *Barbarian* game achieved notoriety due to the ability to lop the opponent's head off with your sword – as well as for its cover art and adverts featuring scantily clad page 3 model, Maria Whittaker. Palace Software's sequel upped the gore level and changed the format from single-screen combat to exploring levels filled with some truly ghastly creatures. This time you also get the choice of playing as the barbarian or Princess Mariana. Reviewed in issue 40, it scored 96% and was described as "by far the best (and goriest) beat-'em-up".

Bubble Bobble
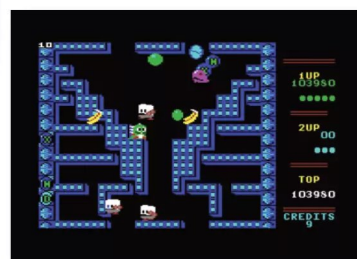
One of the all-time classic coin-ops, Taito's *Bubble Bobble* received a near flawless conversion to the C64 from Firebird Software (owned by BT). Like the arcade version, it works best as a co-operative two-player game as cute dinosaurs Bub and Bob battle their way through 100 single-screen platform levels. They blow bubbles to capture enemies and then burst them to release bonus fruit to be collected along with power-ups. Add in a memorable theme tune and you have a sure-fire winner, which earned a well-deserved Gold Medal in issue 30.

Braybrook, Andrew

Co-founder of Graftgold, Andrew Braybrook features on many people's lists

of all-time greatest C64 game programmers and developers. He designed and produced a string of

classic games, including *Alleykat*, *Uridium*, *Gribbly's Day Out*, *Paradroid* and *Morpheus*.

The development of the last two were serialised in ZZAP! game diaries (issues 3 to 6, and 23 to 30 respectively). Issue 24's diary included a type-in BASIC listing that would supposedly double the speed of the C64's 6510 chip to 2MHz, but when it was run, the program showed an April Fool message. Apparently, as revealed in a later diary instalment, a few readers failed to see the joke and were quite grumpy about it!

Beach-Head II

An improvement over the original, Access Software's superb sequel scored a SIZZLER in issue 4. Set just after World War II, it involves a fictional battle as the Allies raid the Dictator's Pacific island stronghold – you can play either role against the computer or a friend. The conflict

comprises four sections. The first sees the Allied paratroopers dropping in to advance on a machine gun. The roles are switched in the second part as the Dictator aims to stop prisoners escaping. Next, the escapees are flown on a chopper through a vertically scrolling level. Finally, there's a knife-throwing fight between JP Stryker and the Dictator. It all adds up to a cracking action game with lots of replay value.

Boulder Dash

This series of games
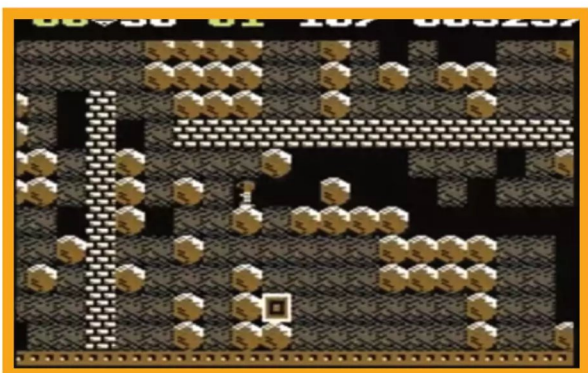
was a firm favourite as the hero Rockford (also known for appearing in the margins of ZZAP! pages) explores caverns to collect diamonds while avoiding being crushed by falling boulders as he digs beneath them. While reminiscent of classic earth-shifting arcade titles *Mr. Do!* and *Dig Dug*, it's a bit more strategic as you exploit the behaviour of the various enemies to reach otherwise inaccessible areas. In addition to the main trilogy of games, the *Boulder Dash Construction Kit* (issue 20, 97%) enables you to create your own levels.

Bug-Byte

One of the earliest 8-bit game publishers, Bug-Byte was founded by two Oxford graduates in 1980 and based in Liverpool.

The company released a string of full-price and budget games in the early to mid 80s, with mixed results. It is perhaps most notable for the staff who left: Mark Butler, David Lawson, and Eugene Evans went off to found Imagine Software, while *Manic Miner* creator Matthew Smith left to co-found Software Projects.

The Bard's Tale

Originated by Michael Cranford, this popular fantasy RPG series saw

three games released on C64 by Electronic Arts – although the original game first saw light in Europe via Ariolasoft, scoring 94% in issue 21 and described as "the best RPG on the Commodore". In true RPG style, the player is able to form a band of up to six characters to explore the dungeons of Skara Brae and engage in combat with various denizens. For some reason, the sequel was never reviewed in ZZAP!, but the third game scored 81% in issue 42.

Bruce Lee

Playing the legendary martial arts star of the title, you explore the many rooms of an evil sorcerer's

fortress in a bid to gather treasure and discover the secret of immortality. In this flick-screen run-and-jump adventure, you are pursued by two assailants – the black Ninja and green Yamo – but can punch and kick them to make them disappear for a while. There's even the option of a two-player mode with your opponent as Yamo. While the original release wasn't reviewed, Americana's budget re-release scored 92% in issue 40.

Bubble Bus

Based in Tonbridge, Kent,

Bubble Bus released a string of games on 8-bit computers in the mid-1980s. Its most notable titles on the C64 were *Wizard's Lair* – which resembled a cross between Ultimate's *Atic Atac* and *Sabre Wulf* – and *Starquake*. A highly addictive platform adventure with some innovative features such as the ability to build platforms, fly on a hover-pad, and use teleports, *Starquake* earned a SIZZLER in issue 14. Both games were ported from Stephen Crow's Spectrum originals.

Braben, David

Braben is best-known for his innovative space-trading name, *Elite*, created with Ian Bell. Originally launched on the BBC Micro, the game was the first to use the technique of 3D hidden line removal for its wireframe graphics.
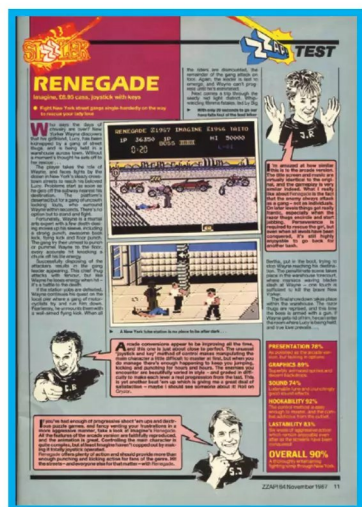
The C64 conversion earned a GOLD MEDAL in issue 1. The review mentioned how wealthy the creators must both be, and the enterprising Braben has since gone on to appear in the Sunday Times Rich List. In addition, he co-founded the Raspberry Pi Foundation, which in 2012 launched its first credit-card-sized computer with the aim of helping young people to learn to code – just like in the old 8-bit days.

Beat-'em-ups

One of the most successful computer game genres, countless beat-'em-ups have graced the C64 over the years, featuring everything from martial arts to boxing and wrestling.

One-on-one affairs include *The Way of the Exploding Fist*, *Bangkok Knights*, and *IK+* – which spiced things up with a third combatant as well as the famous trousers-dropping move! Then there are horizontally scrolling brawlers such as *Renegade*, *Shinobi*, and *Golden Axe*, where you duff your way through enemy hordes. While conversions of some arcade hits such as *Street Fighter*, *Double Dragon* and *Final Fight* were disappointing, there are still plenty of great fighting games to enjoy on the C64.

RANDOOM
Picaro Games, 2021
Digital only, name your own price

Hey, those coloured cubes, eh? What a menace they are! Roaming around in packs of seven, getting up to no good... so annoying! They need to be caught and locked up for their own good, and everyone else's. Fortunately, you're a cube with the power to imprison, so it's up to you to put those blocks behind bars.

It's not as easy as it sounds, however. Each cube is a different colour and you can only imprison the one that matches your current colour. There's a specific order to follow: red, blue, purple, green, yellow, brown and finally orange. Attempting to apprehend the wrong colour results in
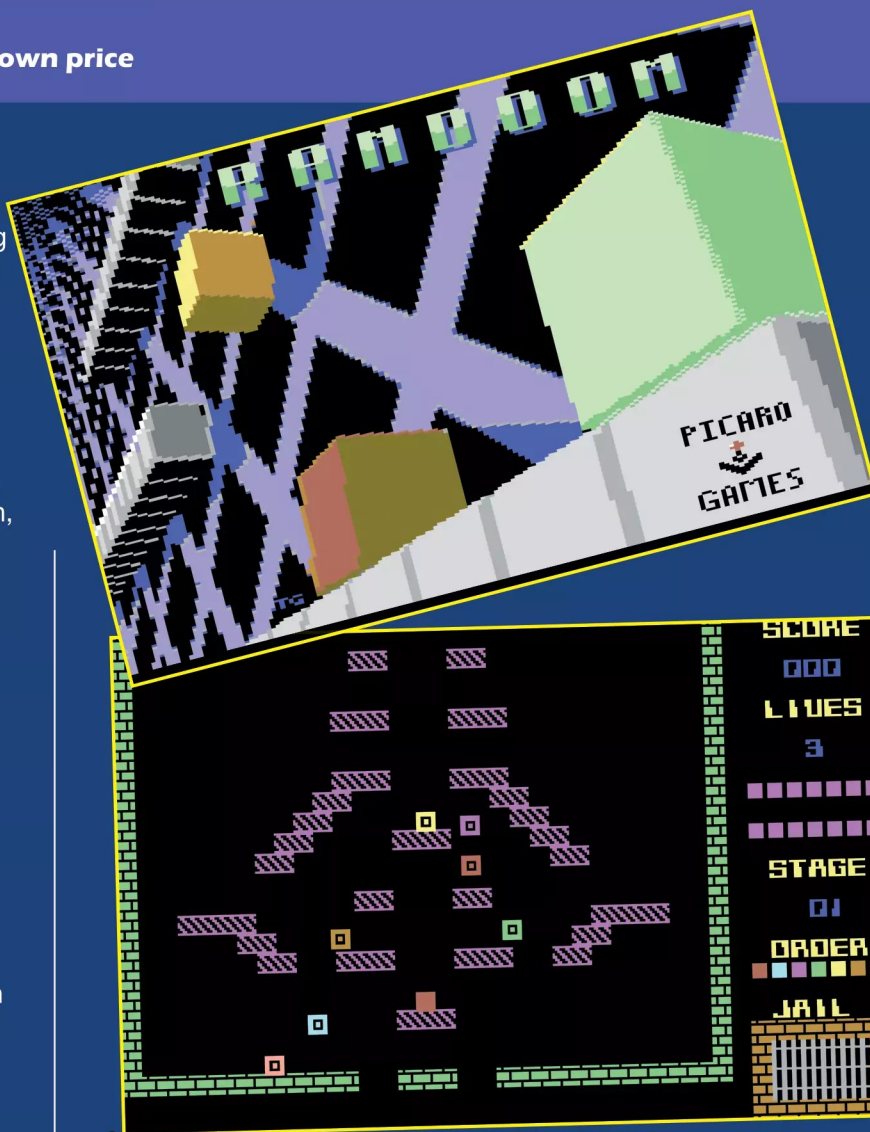
Okay I'm going to get a small negative out of the way here, then it's all glowing stuff I promise Guv'! Like 8% of men, I'm colourblind. Not the devs' fault. But one of the few things that is better since 1982 is coders' understanding of the importance of Accessibility. And yep you guessed it, this game centres on telling colours apart. With a little more consideration they could've made the 2 reds less indistinguishable to 8% of players. Or are they browns?! Agh! And I was expecting to be hating on Randoom because of this, and that painfully slow title graphic (on a real C64 at least)... BUT it's such a novel and addictive concept, and I slowly learned to differentiate the 2 reds; one being "paler". Or are they pink? Pff. The point is, none of that stops me recommending this highly original game. Whether it's because it reminds me of Bubble Bobble with a twist, or the bangin' choons, you can colour me hooked!

I have no idea where the name comes from, and what does it mean? The presentation and graphics are basic, but boy is the music a collection of banging tunes, to use the 90s vernacular. They certainly help pump along the action, which appears simple on the surface, although too easy to slip up and lose a life. Playing it slow and safe gets you through the levels albeit doesn't score highly, the combo mechanic makes sure there is plenty of risk and reward going on. Very clever and there is a definite "one more go" compulsive urge to the game. For once it's actually hip to be square.

M.A.
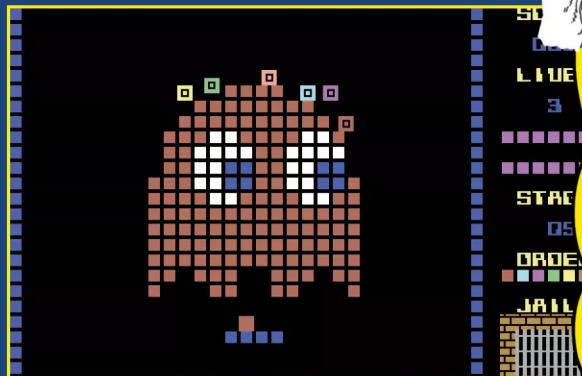
instant death for you! Best not do that, eh?

If you do happen to make an error of judgement and lose a life, well, you have four in total and an extra life is earned at 100 points. To make things a little easier, the order in which you must collect the cubes is shown at the bottom right of the screen, and you

automatically change to the colour you need to collect, so unless you're unfortunate enough to be colour blind, you should be able to tell what you're doing.

If you're particularly skilful and manage to collect colours in quick succession, you'll start a score chain which gives you increased points. The game displays the record

score for a session on the title screen and with 31 screens to play through, there's plenty of potential for maximising your score. Well, off you go, then!

I really like this. It's a short, sharp blast of simple fun, and there's a lot of room in the world for that type of game. Capturing the cubes in order sounds easy enough, but at the start of every level you need to spend a bit of time figuring out your plan. There's a need for patience too, but that's balanced with a chaining score mechanic which adds a risk/reward element. Graphics are functional, although there are some cool background effects, but the music is exceptional – some of the best I've heard in a long time. Randoom is a really good little game; I strongly recommend you try it.

P.M.

PRESENTATION 59%
Loading screen and top score displayed, but not friendly to the colour-blind.

GRAPHICS 58%
All very basic, but with some nice background effects/layouts.

SOUND 91%
Bangin' choons are a real treat for the ears.
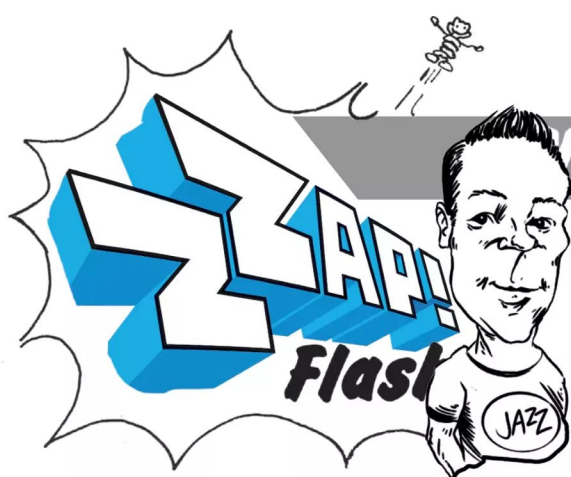
HOOKABILITY 89%
The originality means it has that "just one more go" factor.

LASTABILITY 80%
Will take a while to get through all thirty-one screens.

OVERALL 81%

A novel idea makes for a very playable game.

ZZAP! Flash

...with David "Jazzcat" Simmons,
Hot data for vintage hardware!

Terrestial

Your homeworld has come under attack from an alien race, your government has collapsed and your leaders have gone into hiding. The only chance you have of freeing your homeworld is a group of trained pilots located on your homeworld's moon. There on the dark side is a secret base where the last remaining fighters, dropships and tanks remain. Use all your skill and cunning to destroy the alien defences and take out the chain of command, freeing your homeworld.

Developed by ICON64 with code from Stuart Collier, music from Saul Cross and artwork/design by Trevor Storey, the game was originally called *Homeworld* but for obvious reasons (active IP for one), they renamed it *Terrestrial*.

The game takes place over 10 different game styles with influences from the likes of *Raid Over Moscow*, *Cabal* and *Beach Head*. You won't just play each stage once; for example, the route to each shield generator will also involve the canyon, landing zone and abandoned city. In terms of game completion and availability, development progress has been made on every stage of the game, with the front end
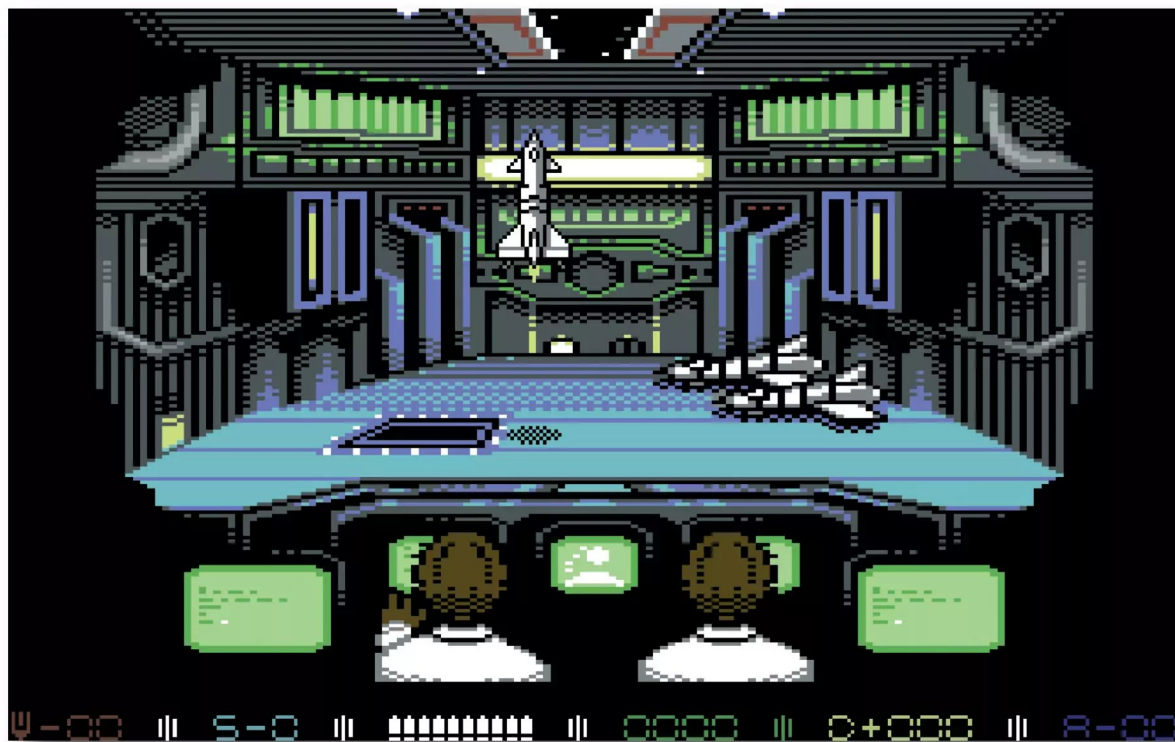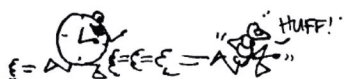
completely done (borrowed in part from ICON64's *Hyperion* project which was put to eternal slumber). Trev Storey estimates the game is around 50% complete.

Look to see this one under the Psytronik Software stable for both disk and cartridge sometime in 2022.

Undead resurrected!

The post-war, fascist police state known as the 'United Remains of Murica' has been hit with a zombie plague. The player is Jon Plissken, a resurrected, cybernetic cop sent to retrieve an anti-zombie vaccine from the infested city, and retrieve the scientist (Chani, his ex-girlfriend) behind the vaccine who is also trapped in the city and held hostage (as she was in the city when zombie army attacked). The city is ruled by the leader, a mysterious "Rotterminator", who is a demonic cyber zombie from the Hell dimension.

Undead draws inspiration from the likes of Splatterhouse, Final Fight and Narc. Essentially, the game is in the same vein as *Kung-Fu Master*.

Development for *Undead* commenced way back in 1990 and came to a halt in 1992. 30 years later and the game is being overhauled to modern standards.

The dev team confirmed that there was always motivation to return to the game, but what finally made it happen was simply — available time. Additionally, it's now easier to develop for the C64 via

ZZAP! Flash

routes and game endings. Game progress, hiscores and trophies will be saved to the cartridge. Also, there will be an *Undead* editor — a game editor that enables you to make your own belt scroll beat 'em ups; this will

emulation than it was in the early nineties. Also, as Miha now has 30+ years of experience in game development and graphics and Pekka has a similar amount in programming, they no longer feel that the task is as daunting as it used to be.

Undead will feature at least five levels, smooth 16-colour bitmap scrolling with fully hand-drawn backgrounds, adaptive dynamic difficulty, metagame where you can collect trophies for your mancave, combo hit counter system with a dynamic bonus points system, and hundreds of frames of animation. Also planned but not yet confirmed is sampled sound and a shop system for additional moves for the main character in addition to alternate
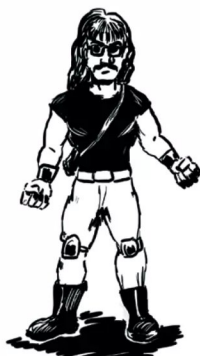
JON "BERZERKER" PLISSKEN

POPCORN ZOMBIE

WORM

CRAWLING ZOMBIE

PREGNANT ZOMBIE

UNDEAD CHARACTER DESIGNS 30-11-2021

be released after the game is out — for the public as freeware.

Why cartridge only? Well, the game was very memory intensive to begin with, meaning that it would have taken lots of floppy disk space, even though there was a neat loader that streamed from 1541. Using cartridge simply makes things easier, plus the ability to swap memory from cartridge super-fast means that it is possible to have more animation, more graphics, more enemies and more gameplay features etc.

When and where, and how? Forecasting when *Undead* will be released is difficult, but the dev team is looking to finalise by the end of 2022. Discussions have commenced with a publisher to release *Undead* as a physical, fully-boxed product. Additionally, the game will be packaged with a graphic novel which will be created by Miha, who is also a professional comic book artist.

However, since development is in their spare time, it remains to be seen if the 2022 goal is realistic.

So far, everything has been progressing smoothly and super-fast with no problems whatsoever.

ZOMBIE DOG

ROTTERMINATOR PHASE 1

POSSESSED

NIGHT CRAWLER

WIGHT

UNDEAD CHARACTER DESIGNS 30-11-2021 SHEET #2

ZZAP! 64 RADAR · 12 MONTHS OUT!

Release dates subject to change (estimations sourced from the developers where possible!)

GøbLiN

Gøblin

by vanja utne

copyright 2021 pond software

"Smallest Goblin must find our potatoes! We all decided!". A platform action game arriving on both disk and tape by Vanja Utne of Pond Software.
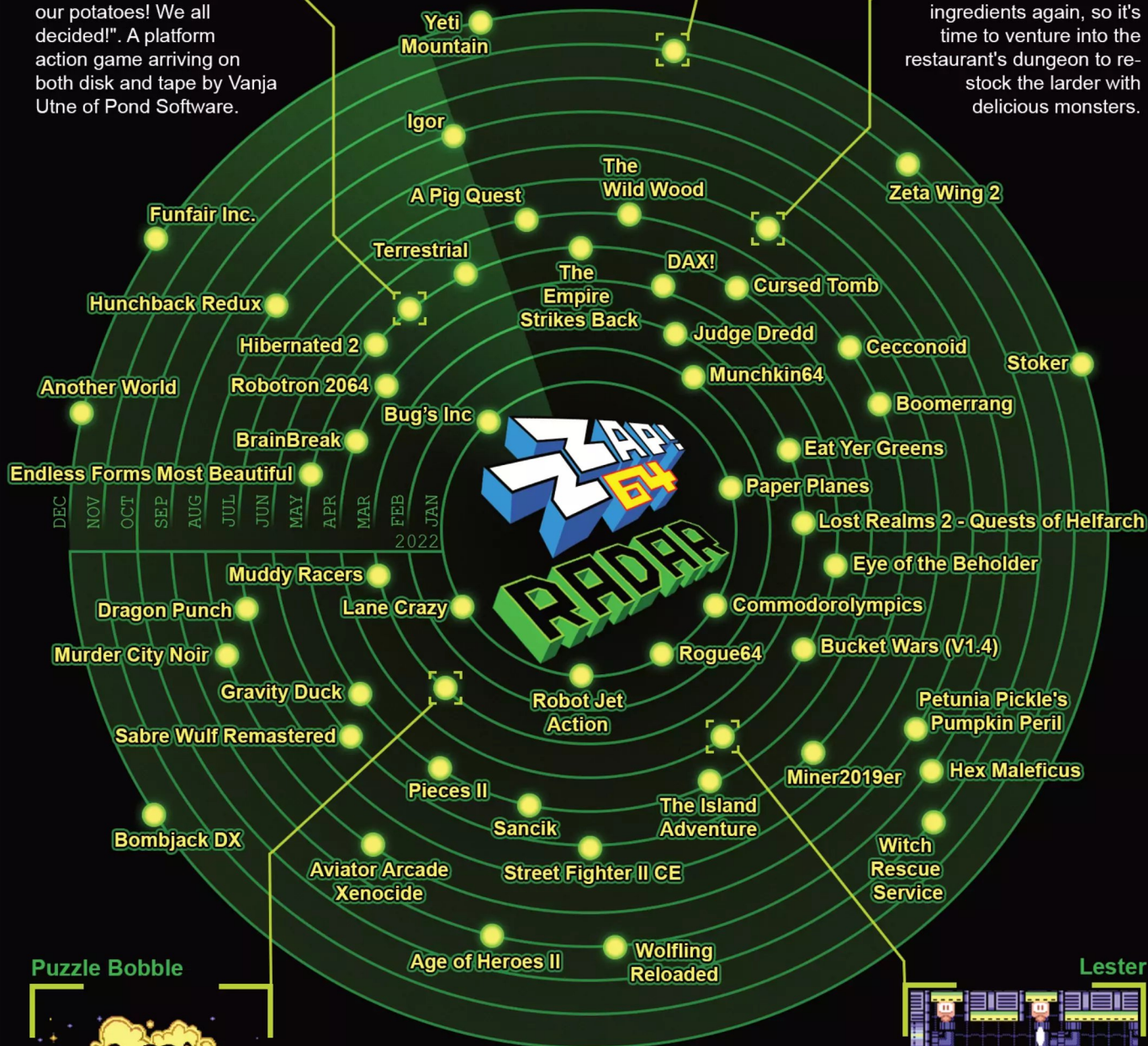
Ninja Gaiden

A side-scrolling cinematic action-platformer where you play Ryu Hayabusa, a demon-human hybrid and wielder of the legendary Dragon Sword!

Chef Quest+

CHEF QUEST+

Oh no! Chef is out of ingredients again, so it's time to venture into the restaurant's dungeon to re-stock the larder with delicious monsters.
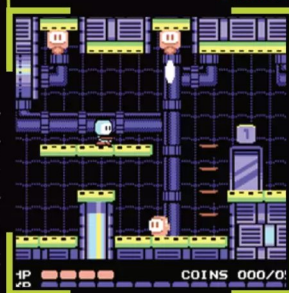
Yeti Mountain

Igor

A Pig Quest

The Wild Wood

Zeta Wing 2

Funfair Inc.

Terrestrial

DAX!

Cursed Tomb

Hunchback Redux

The Empire Strikes Back

Judge Dredd

Cecconoid

Stoker

Hibernated 2

Munchkin64

Another World

Robotron 2064

Boomerrang

BrainBreak

Bug's Inc

Eat Yer Greens

Endless Forms Most Beautiful

Paper Planes

Lost Realms 2 - Quests of Helfarch

Eye of the Beholder

DEC NOV OCT SEP AUG JUL JUN MAY APR MAR FEB JAN
2022

Muddy Racers

Lane Crazy

Commodorolympics

Dragon Punch

Rogue64

Bucket Wars (V1.4)

Murder City Noir

Gravity Duck

Robot Jet Action

Petunia Pickle's Pumpkin Peril

Sabre Wulf Remastered

Miner2019er

Hex Maleficus

Pieces II

The Island Adventure

Bombjack DX

Sancik

Witch Rescue Service

Aviator Arcade Xenocide

Street Fighter II CE

Age of Heroes II

Wolfling Reloaded

Puzzle Bobble

PUZZLE BOBBLE

INSERT COIN
START 1P/2P

CREDITS 0:

A port of the arcade version by Taito. Puzzle Bobble will feature a single player version containing 32 rounds. The two player mode has been included and tweaked for better playability.

Lester

A Metroidvania style platformer set in a space station under construction where the security drones have gone rogue. Lester is an experimental next-gen droid with a self-aware AI sent in to solve the problem.

1P
COINS 000/0